Interview with Harmon E. Kirby

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR HARMON E. KIRBY

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is August 31, 1995 and we are interviewing Ambassador Harmon E. Kirby. You were born January 27, 1934. This is done for the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Harmon, could you start by giving your background, where you were born, a little about your parents, and then we'll move on to education.

KIRBY: I was born in Hamilton, Ohio, near Cincinnati. Both my parents were born in Kentucky, had come to Ohio at an early age, married in Cincinnati and then went to the town of Hamilton, north of Cincinnati and established life there. I started my education in the Hamilton Public Schools.

Q: What was your father doing? What was his livelihood?

KIRBY: My father worked in a stove making factory and then in a Ford Motor plant after that.

Q: And you started in public schools?

KIRBY: I started in public schools...first, Jefferson Tyler Elementary School and then Roosevelt Junior High School until age 15. I then somewhat surprisingly got the opportunity to go off to Phillips Exeter Academy...in New Hampshire. So, I did my high school years up there, although obviously my home continued to be in Ohio.

Q: How did you find Exeter as a school?

KIRBY: Well, first class. I found it superb. It was a part of the country that I hadn't known before. It had an intensive concentration on academics and sports and sort of a full life, if you will...a school-boy life that I hadn't known. It was only for boys at that time. About 20 years after I left the school, it became co-educational.

Q: How about international affairs, did you get much at the time there?

KIRBY: Quite a lot. I was reflecting upon, last night, very briefly, my fascination with foreign policy and international affairs. I might say, by way of preface, that my enthusiasm for America and American history started in the third grade in the Hamilton schools. In grade school during the Second World War, with uncles and cousins off at war and the newspapers and radio full of the great engagement, it made one interested in the world. And, I found, through junior high school, and then when I got to Exeter, that history, if you will, though not to the exclusion of other studies, really “turned me on.” At Exeter, one portion of our high school history course had to do with diplomatic history. And I found myself getting extremely interested in diplomatic history in about the 10th or 11th grade. This sounds a little corny, and my only defense in relating it is that it's true. One Friday night in the fall, in my senior year in high school, coming out of the library, I suddenly saw on the librarian's desk a copy of George Kennan's slender volume, “Diplomacy” and I asked “what's that?” And he said, “I think you might like to read that, why don't you take it with you?” I did, and although I had had other plans for the weekend, I did whip through it during the weekend along with other things I had to do, and found it very interesting. I found in that volume reference to the Foreign Service and to Kennan's experience in it.

And I began to think of the Foreign Service, and that idea stayed with me through college, not to the exclusion of other thoughts about career and profession, but that's really how it all started.

Q: Well, then you went to Harvard, is that correct?

KIRBY: Yes, that's correct.

Q: And you graduated in 1956? What courses were you taking at Harvard?

KIRBY: 1956...yes. Actually a broad range of courses. I took a lot of Government, History, Economics and Literature courses. My field of concentration, however, was Government. I majored in Government, with a heavy concentration in International Relations.

Q: Do you find any, looking back on it, was there any thrust at Harvard towards how they looked at the world or anything like that, would you say?

KIRBY: I think Harvard did have a way of looking at things, although in a way, much of it, I would say, wasn't unique to Harvard at the time. I know that this is a generational comment, and you'll have to forgive me, but I think, in many respects that the 1950's was a great era. The era, certainly at Harvard, and at many other institutions across the country was full of idealism. We'd been through World War II, and I entered Harvard as the Korean War was winding down. In university government departments, and this was true at Harvard but elsewhere as well, there was a sense that the U.S. had gotten involved in the world in a major way in World War II and that our country would, necessarily, have to stay engaged with the world. The U.S. had had events and responsibility thrust upon it, if you will. And then the Korean War came along and we were in the world to stay whether we liked it or not. And we thought we bore a heavy responsibility to try to make the world a better place. That was very much a part of the undergraduate atmosphere and most of us found it exhilarating.

Q: I graduated a little bit earlier, from William's in 1950, but there was a sense of service, "noblesse oblige"—you were supposed to do something. Sort of a great privilege to go to University and you were supposed to use those tools to make the world a better place. Looks like you sort of got caught up in service right away, didn't you?

KIRBY: I think it's fair to say that I did, yes.

Q: Then the U.S. Army came in?

KIRBY: Then the Army, immediately after Harvard for two years.

Q: What did you do in the Army?

KIRBY: Well, I enjoyed the experience very much, probably more than I had initially thought I would, although I didn't resist entering the Army in any way. After Basic Training and Advanced Administrative Training at what was then Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, I went off to what was then the major military headquarters in Japan...First Cavalry Division Headquarters at Roppongi Barracks in Tokyo. Seventeen months in Japan—for me a new world—was a very exciting and grand experience. My military duties were not too onerous, and I had a boss who liked Japan very much and encouraged me to travel. So, I traveled whenever I could in Japan and got around very widely. There is no doubt that that experience further increased my interest in becoming involved in the field of international relations.

Q: I too, went through the Japan experience, somewhat earlier. But, it was a tremendous eye- opener for an American. I mean, it was really different. And, money went a long way then.

KIRBY: Yes, one could live well on little income then. It is very different today.

Q: The Japanese were very receptive to American things and I think it opened an awful lot of young people's eyes who went through the military experience there. What type of work were you doing then?

KIRBY: I was in the Adjutant General's Office, doing primarily various kinds of administrative work, largely on the personnel side. I did a broad range of things related to personnel for the Division and for that Headquarters.

Q: Just sort of a military aside, there had been this horrible thing in the Korean War where they took the troops that had been occupying Japan, including the First Cavalry Division, and threw them into the Korean conflict and found that they had atrophied, that the troops really weren't up to combat at that time. What had happened to an outfit like the First Cavalry Division? Now, the "Great War" was over but having gone through that trauma, that occupation duty really didn't get you ready for much.

KIRBY: I do have some very vivid memories of discussing that very phenomenon that you have referred to with people who had experienced it. There at First Cav headquarters there were still a few officers, but I remember especially two sergeants who were still around, and they had been in the occupation force in Japan and had been sent to Korea at the outset of that conflict. They described to me very vividly over a few beers on a couple of Friday nights how their small force had been sent quickly to Korea without any real preparation. They were Headquarter's troops; they were "office jockeys" as they would put it, and they were sent to Korea without much equipment and without winter clothes. Of course, the conflict started in June, I know, but some of the soldiers stayed on quite a while. And, it really, in the way these sergeants (who were good loyal soldiers) described it, not unkindly, it was kind of like lambs to the slaughter initially. They said they thought they understood the reason. America had had to make an immediate response to communist aggression from North Korea. When you get into a crisis situation, sometimes you go with what you have immediately available. The closest American troops were in Japan and everybody knew they were not going to stem the tide; however, their immediate

despatch was certainly designed to make a statement. There were obviously some rough patches. Later, the First Cavalry took a lot of criticism. One would have to talk to the military people at the Pentagon to get a better view of this. I myself always thought the “Cav” was perhaps unfairly criticized for some of the early problems in Korea; there were a lot of jokes, even when I arrived in Tokyo in 1956, about how that had not been their finest hour. Even though I'm not a professional soldier, I'm sort of a “loyalist” and tend to identify with whatever organization I've been assigned to. And it seems to me, that by the time I arrived in Japan, the First Cav had regained its morale and its status. It was an easy administrative job by the time I got there but I thought it was well organized and they were making a real effort to see that the Headquarters troops were properly trained in weapons use. All the inspections were up to standard. In fact, we had more inspections than we liked. We used to complain about it. By the time of the Vietnam War, warfare had changed dramatically, and the configuration of the First Cavalry and other front line divisions had changed. In any case, the Cav went on to gain some glory and to do good things for its name and reputation in the very difficult war in Vietnam. So, it was basically a sound organization.

Q: You got out in 1958. What did you do?

KIRBY: I got out in 1958 and this has a light Foreign Service connection in a negative sense. I got out in '58 and started thinking about the Foreign Service again. And, I think the years get telescoped a little bit, but I think it was '58, anyway; I inquired of the Department of State by letter about taking the Foreign Service Exam, but found they weren't giving the written exam that year. I think that was 1958. They were having budget problems, among other things. I think that year and this present year (1995) are the only years in my personal experience that the Foreign Service exam will not have been given. Anyway, I got a polite response back saying, “No, we're not giving the exam.” I was fortunate, though, because I landed a job in the Personnel and Labor Relations Department of Diamond National Corporation, a large corporation making paper products, among other things. Diamond National was a large nationwide corporation,

with a papermaking and packaging unit in Middletown, Ohio, about 10 miles from my parent's home. So, I got out of the Army in August of 1958 and went to work for Diamond in December of that year and then worked for them for all of 1959. In December, 1959, I took the written Foreign Service exam, sitting for that in Cincinnati, Ohio. Then I had an opportunity, suddenly out of the blue, to go to New York in January, 1960, to become Executive Assistant to Hudson's Executive Vice-President, the operational head of this company. It was headquartered in New York and had manufacturing plants up and down the east coast from Vermont to Florida. So, I worked with them during 1960. I had no idea how I had done on the Foreign Service Exam or whether I'd ever be offered anything by the State Department. I found the business world experience to be far more appealing than I had expected. I had had no doubt it would be interesting, but I guess I did have some lingering doubts in my mind about whether the business world would suit me, whether I would be any good at it. In the event, I greatly enjoyed working for both companies. Diamond National was a good company with challenging work, I liked the people I was with. I'm not “goody-goody” in saying these things—they really were good people. Not only the executive leadership , but down into the plants on the production lines. In labor relations you get involved with people in the plants. So, anyway, I then went on to Hudson Paper and in a way repeated the same experience with another very good company. I found New York, first of all, far more to my liking than I had thought I would. I'd always accepted the old saw about what a great place to visit but not to live, and I had previously visited the city. When I moved to New York with Hudson I enjoyed living there enormously. I had a very good group of friends with a lot of interests. Many friends were American and many European. And then I worked for the company's dynamic Vice-President, as I said. I had a broad range of duties. One of my most memorable experiences was the management's sending me cold, with no extensive experience, up to the plant in Vermont to negotiate a union contract. To my astonishment, and although he was certainly too polite to say so, certainly to the head of the company's astonishment also, I got that contract signed, sealed and delivered in nothing flat. And I had thought that I was just going there to do the preliminaries before top management came in and sealed

the deal. But the local union, management, and I had a meeting of the minds. Thus, too, at Hudson Pulp & Paper, I found myself enjoying corporate life. During the year of 1960, sometime in the summer I took the oral exam for the Foreign Service, in New York, while still working for Hudson.

Q: Could you describe the oral exam a bit, do you recall the things you were asked?

KIRBY: I do. It was sort of a standard exam, I think. I didn't find it terribly difficult. I seem to recall there were four or five on the panel, three from the State Department's Foreign Service. Dan Braddock, a career Minister was the panel Chairman. Later Dan and I both served in India. I think there was somebody on the panel from the Department of Commerce, and also one other person. Despite all the rumors I had heard to the contrary, I found it to be a very professional setting. It wasn't “goody-goody”, nor did panel members play what kids refer today to as “mind-games” to set a heavy atmosphere. The proceedings were rather straight forward. They asked what were then the standard questions to find out whether I knew anything at all about the U.S. government and was interested in it. You know, “You're from Ohio, who is your Senator?” “Could you tell us a little bit about your Army experience?” There were a couple of questions designed to find out if I was really following current international events. Really, 1960 was a big year, as you know, with the U-2 incident and that. So there were a couple of questions designed to see if I was reading the morning newspapers and what I thought about where America stood in the world and about its responsibilities. But, the interview moved along very smoothly, I thought. And then I simply went out the door and waited, to learn a few minutes later that I had passed the oral exam. I had no further word from the Department of State until suddenly, in early January, 1961, I received a call from Personnel in the State Department, saying that they would be pleased to offer me a Foreign Service appointment and asking whether I could appear in Washington toward the end of the month. While I knew I wanted to join the Foreign Service, I was always glad that it caused a slight wrench —or more than a slight wrench to think about leaving the job I was in in New York. I knew I wanted to go into government, I still had the feeling that I wanted to be a diplomat and

work for the government, that I wanted to work abroad, but I found the business world to be very exciting in many ways. I had had a lot of good experiences that year. Visiting the various Hudson plants around the country, I had been involved with some very top-flight professionals, with people I admired. Some had gone to the same schools I had, some had not but most were highly qualified professionals. Moreover, as I said earlier, I was in with a group of friends whom I liked very much. We used to go on sailing and camping weekends together and such. So I paused; well I didn't really pause on the phone when the woman said, will you come down, do you want to join the State Department? I said, “yes”. But in the weeks thereafter, I asked myself a few times, “do I really want to do this?” And the answer always came back, “yes I do want to do this,” but I wished somehow that I could take New York with me.

Q: Can you tell me about the class you came in with and your training? This was brand new Kennedy-era and “Ask not what your country can do...”

KIRBY: Absolutely. He gave that inaugural speech one week before we were sworn in as Foreign Service Officers. We were sworn in either on the 25th or 26th of January 1961. I've forgotten...either one day or the other. He gave that speech the week before and it really captured the imagination of a generation.

Q: Absolutely, get out and do something...it's not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country. Can you talk about the spirit, the people, the training as a young Foreign Service officer?

KIRBY: Well, I think you have characterized the spirit of the times very well. The spirit of the period was to be young, to be American, to be out in the world and to do things that would be consistent with both protecting the U.S. national interest and with doing what you could to ameliorate problems abroad for those who didn't have as much as we did in America. The training, as you recall well, the Foreign Service Institute's A-100 course, the basic 8 week course was especially valuable for the bonding with colleagues. I entered

with a group of 30. During the A-100 course we were getting to know people in our group of trainees and were also absorbing the culture of the State Department and the Foreign Service. The bonding and bureaucratic culture adaptation may have been more apparent to me later, in retrospect, than it was at the time. But it seems to me that these were very valuable aspects of the training period, just day after day, slowly, becoming a part of a new scene. The specific training itself was very basic. And in saying that I don't mean to denigrate the training at all. Without knowing everything I should know about the training of incoming officers today, I have the strong impression that the training is now far more sophisticated and that it is far more concentrated on policy issues and on trade craft. I found a little bit of it superficial at times in 1961. When I came into the State Department I guess I thought we were all budding George Kennans and that his acolytes would be on the podium day after day trying to pound policy ideas and process into our young heads. In reality, our speakers usually addressed far more prosaic nuts and bolts matters. It turned out that all this was very valuable to us in the long-run, but it was fairly basic, of how you get from here to there and how you do this or that. As noted, I don't mean to denigrate the training any way, even if it was basic. Perhaps one of the most useful parts of it was the effort to teach us about the workings of our own government, the other agencies, and how the State Department related to other agencies. And how we, as Foreign Service Officers, would have to relate to the Department of Agriculture, to the Department of Commerce, Labor, etc. Thus, the training was useful. Those were things we had to have, it was pretty basic and prosaic—not stimulating, but very useful. So, when we did our evaluation of the course, I can remember even now, saying that it had given me many of the things I needed.

Q: What was sort of the composition of your class? Can you remember, 30 people about, where did they come from?

KIRBY: It was, you know, everyone believes his group is the brightest and the best. Of course, (laughs) this was true in our case. We had one woman, whom we all loved dearly, as a sister, a friend and a colleague, and 29 men. Obviously, times have

changed for the better, I would say. There should have been more women, but our one member was delightful. You had people from across the country. There was a wide geographic distribution. With respect to educational institutions, there was also a very wide distribution, too—a few from the Ivy League, but people from large colleges in the mid-west and far-west and from small colleges throughout the country. You had people who had majored in government and history, but I also remember that one of our colleagues had majored in music. He was a very thoughtful guy, very entertaining, very much a part of the group. But he had been a music major. There had been a pretty wide range of under-graduate majors. I had not at that stage gone to graduate school, although there were some who had graduate degrees. There were a few, not many, who were married. But, in the eyes of the others, I gather, because they commented on it, I had followed a more or less traditional route—college, army, job (not one but two), and then the Foreign Service. As some laughingly said, “He's the one who's had a job”; others had also had jobs previously, many of them had not because of graduate work or family or whatever. Some had done military service, many not. It was a friendly and congenial group. These were people who, not because they had to, but because they liked to, would go out for dinner together, and go out for long weekends in the Shenandoah or in Pennsylvania together. I look back on that period with very warm feelings toward the people we were involved with, that I was interacting with in a very friendly way.

I might offer an anecdote, which you can then edit out of this transcript if you wish. I remember vividly the first day that we all got together. We had been sworn in on the preceding day, but we had our first real get-together on the next afternoon (my 27th birthday) around a long table. And so it was the classic show and tell. Each of us had to stand up and identify herself or himself, and tell a little about what we had done to date, what brought us into the Foreign Service and what our plans were for the future. I spoke toward the end of the group. I had made a mental note that 18 out of the group of 30 said they had a passion for Africa and wanted to go to Africa. Between 15-18 said that the single thing that got them thinking about joining the Foreign Service was a popular book

of the time—The Ugly American. That more than any other single thing, had gotten them wanting to go into the Foreign Service they stated. While I didn't know these people yet, I already sensed that they were estimable and true and straight-forward. But I simply didn't quite believe that 15 of 30 were as determined to go to Africa as they had said. And I also had doubts about whether 15 or 18 had really been brought in by the ugly American. I had read the book and enjoyed it but that wasn't what had prompted me to come in, so I didn't quite believe all that I had heard, thinking that perhaps people were reacting to the occasion and to what they thought was the trendy thing to say at the time. So, when my turn came, I gave the personalia they wanted straight and then at the end of it, I decided to be a bit whimsical. I quoted from a book that someone had given me as I left New York to come down here, Peter Ustinov's “Diplomats.” I don't know whether you've seen it, a hilarious compilation. And I said that I was struck by the concluding paragraph of his book's introduction. It's been a long time, while I can't recall verbatim how that paragraph went, it was truly marvelous when he said, “I dedicate this book to that young man who doesn't have the talent for literature...and he then goes on with a long list of the “does not haves” who doesn't have the wind for long distance running, strength in his biceps for wrestling, etc.—and then ends by dedicating it to “the young man or woman who has a lot of bluff and not much else.” And I said that when I had first read it, that I laughed uproariously, and that the paragraph had somehow put things into acute perspective for me. And I said that my earnest hope was that as the years went on, the Department of State would find that our group, while perhaps having no real talent for literature or wrestling would nonetheless, bring to its tasks a great deal more than simple bluff. And my colleagues liked it! Incidentally, in my view, over the years our class proved its worth to the Foreign Service and to U.S. diplomacy.

Q: Well, you know, that African thing. I was in my second tour in 1960 and I put in for Nigeria. It was very much the thing. It was very exciting. This is where things are really going to happen. Today, in 1995, Central Asia is the big...well, I mean the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is probably the most exciting place.

KIRBY: I think probably so; Eastern Europe is very much the “in” thing today. You're right, Stu, it was an exciting time. The notion of so many countries coming into independence in the late 1950's and 1960's, I was caught up in it in New York. I remember going to lectures and taking a couple of courses at NYU on Africa at the time. I just didn't quite believe that everybody who came into the Foreign Service at the time wanted to be assigned to Africa —the world is very large. However, we were all caught up in the excitement and euphoria of independence breaking out everywhere in Africa. I certainly was.

Q: On assignments, where did you go? What did you want and what did you get?

KIRBY: I didn't have strong feelings. I had had some college French so after the A-100 course, the basic training course, I was put into French language training. I wanted to go to Europe to a French speaking post. I preferred going to Europe simply because I'd never been there though I'd studied a lot of diplomatic history on Europe. So having been in the Far East I felt I needed to know something about Europe. However, at that time, I didn't think about Europe being the place where I wanted to concentrate my diplomatic career. So, initially, I was told I was going to Paris. That assignment was later scrubbed for some reason, and I went to our Mission to the European Headquarters of the UN (United Nations)—to the Consular section of that mission. We later broke off as a separate Consulate General. I was in Geneva for two years.

Q: What was the mission like at that time? We're talking 1961 to...August 1961 to 1963. What was the mission to the UN?

KIRBY: The official title was the United States Mission to the European Headquarters of the UN. Again, I was in the Consular section. About half way through my time there, the Consular Section broke off and became a separate organization, a Consulate General, reporting to the Embassy in Bern and no longer to the Ambassador at the Mission. It was a heady time to be in Geneva—the early 60's. The Mission was essentially a holding organization, a housekeeping organization for dealing with the European Headquarters of

the UN, but it also had a large part of its responsibilities, looking after the needs of official U.S. delegations coming to Geneva (as they still do today) for one reason or another. This was the very beginning of the CCD, the Conference on Disarmament. I remember that Secretary of state, Dean Rusk, and a very large delegation came to kick that off. Of course, the Russians were there in force, too. It started off, I forget, you'd have to be a disarmament expert to remember how many transformations it went through, but the CCD started off as a committee of 16, I think, and then expanded to 24. Those negotiations came to town very frequently and were very high level. Early during the time I was there, there occurred one of many on Laos. Averell Harriman led the delegation for the United States. The U.S.-Soviet hot-line negotiations were conducted in Geneva, setting up the first direct communications hot-line between the White House and the Kremlin. Today, it seems like small potatoes, but as a Vice Consul, I was immensely pleased when the Ambassador invited me among others to be in the room when the hot-line agreement was formally signed by the United States and the Soviet Union. They broke out the champagne afterward, and it seemed in its modest way like making history, well, it was. It was a grand occasion. While the pace of international conferences and negotiations in Geneva accelerated in the decades since, in the early 1960's you were beginning to get there a lot of negotiations on many interesting world issues. Another thing, it didn't affect us directly but one of the things we were aware of were the French-Algerian negotiations that were going on at Evian, France at that time. The Algerian negotiators were in Geneva or Lausanne and would go by helicopter or boat across the lake to Evian every morning. Those negotiations brought about Algerian independence. There were people down at the Hotel Des Bergues in Geneva briefing the international press on the course of those negotiations. So, at that time, in the early 1960's, one had the sense of Geneva being a cockpit of a lot of things that really mattered.

Q: Your work was mainly what?

KIRBY: In Geneva it was almost exclusively consular. There was an attempt made by our disarmament mission to get me transferred to them and that's something I would have

liked to have done, had the State Department agreed. At the time, however, I enjoyed the consular work. It was a marvelous mission, I had some supervisory responsibilities, and the job was great fun and brought me into contact with a lot of interesting people. I used to spend my evenings talking to my pals on the disarmament delegation and some of the other delegations and they said, “You should really be with us!” Well, I said if there was a way to do it, I would love to. So, the Ambassador heading the disarmament delegation asked Washington, and they said that since I had been assigned to consular work for two years I should continue with it. But, doing consular work was fine. If you're interested in the atmosphere, I might say that it was an exciting time. I guess Geneva has always been an exciting place for mixing various kinds of people. It was an exciting place to be as a 27 year old Vice-Consul, my age when I first went there. One met extremely interesting people in many walks of life and I saw it as a part of my continuing education just to know them.

I'll give you a quick thumbnail example of the interesting things that turned up. One morning I got a telephone call from a woman saying that an American citizen—she gave me his name but it meant nothing to me—living in Geneva would like to come see me and asked whether he could come see me the following morning. I said of course. The next day a quite elderly gentleman came in, introduced himself and asked me rather earnestly whether it was safe for him to go back to the United States. And I said, “Well, sir, I don't know what the problem is, I think it's a safe place, what is the issue?” He then went on to describe himself. He had gotten caught up in the scandals of the Harding Administration in the 1920's (the Teapot Dome and that sort of thing). He described exactly how he was involved and what have you. I've forgotten the details now but he, like many at the time had beat a quick retreat from the U.S.—left town before the sheriff got them, as it were. And he had been away from the U.S. ever since. He was a very elderly man now, not in the best of health, and he wanted to go home and what did I think of that, he asked. Now, again, this was a man who left the U.S. in the early 1920's and we're talking in 1961, almost 40 years later. And I told him I didn't know the answer but if there was a specific

question he wanted me to ask Washington, I could put it in a format that would presumably elicit an answer. He wanted to think about it, he wasn't sure whether he wanted questions put, even informally. Well, he never did come back to see me but at least I had been able to lay out some parameters for him. People who had been very fleetingly touched by the Communist bug in their youth in Italy or France, particularly Italy, began to explore in the early 1960's whether they could receive visitors visas to the U.S. I remember one chap who was married to an American woman. Under our visa laws he was proscribed from entering the United States but wanted to discuss what his chances might be. He was an intellectual and sought to explain to me the whole background of Europe after World War II and what it had been like as a youth in that fluid atmosphere. Regardless of where one came down on any particular political issue, there were a lot to talk [sic] within Geneva. There were a lot of movie stars around. One of my most difficult mornings was keeping my aplomb and acting like a serious Foreign Service officer when Gina Lollobrigida came into my office to get a visa. She was as beautiful off the screen as on. Anyway, life in Geneva was great fun. And also, Geneva was good to use as a base for getting around Europe. So I traveled very widely.

Q: Moving from Gina Lollobrigida to something else. What about, I guess, it would be October 1962, there was the missile crisis in Cuba. It very much hit the UN, mainly in New York, but how did that hit you all?

KIRBY: The crisis unfolded so quickly that I don't think it affected our work, the work of the mission, the work of the Consulate, to any major degree. It certainly put a damper on the mood and morale of people I knew, however. Europeans tend to be a little more pessimistic than Americans. I was getting phone calls from people I knew from probably eight or ten countries. I had a very good Swedish friend in Geneva who said, “I know you Americans will do what you have to do and should do. I telephoned my mother in Sweden last night and told her the world is going to war and I don't know when if ever we'll meet again.” I said, “Wait a minute, that's too dramatic.” First of all, I always believed (and I know it's easier to say it after the fact, but I said it during the crisis) I always believed that

we would find a way to get Khrushchev to back down. I believed that we would hang firm, hang tough and that we should. Looking at the balance of forces and looking at the map it was implausible to me that Khrushchev would go to war with the United States over Cuba once his bluff was called. I thus wasn't quite as pessimistic as so many people in Europe were—they were very pessimistic. I was in Geneva and you're in a little bit of a cocoon there, a little protected from some of the political winds in other European capitals. I didn't hear an enormous amount of criticism of the United States. The sentiment was more, “You Americans will have to do what you have to do.” There was one spinoff from the missile crisis that affected our work in the consular section modestly in one area. I think this occurred some months after the missile crisis. Some issue relating to Cuba had arisen, and world leftist organizations and the leftist press had put out the word to lean on the United States. That we should be nicer to Castro on something—I frankly don't remember what the issue was. Suddenly there came to my office four young Americans whom I had never met. They were in graduate school around Geneva, and I think one or two were in the Institute des Hautes Etudes. Anyway, they were very upset by our government's policies and came to see me as a U.S. representative. I was the one they were sent to. I thought they were mistaken on the issue in question, but I asked them why they felt the way they did. We had about an hour together and they said well, that I had made an impression on them and had given them some things to think about that they hadn't previously considered. They noted that they had been planning to be in the forefront of a demonstration—in those days there weren't many political demonstrations in Geneva, but there was a group planning a demonstration outside the Mission—and they had been asked to be among the organizers...the “up-front” people because they were American students. Apart from addressing the substantive issues, I told them why I really didn't think they wanted to do that and I said you know, it's going to be your call but you're talking now to an American official who is not that much older than you are (five or six years) and I can tell you the world is different from the inside, once you really study the issues. So anyway at the end of this session, they said I'd given them some things to think about and they

weren't going to be among the organizers. They were going to think it over and they would probably march in the procession but that they decided they didn't want to be up front.

Anyway, the day came, Friday night, and I went outside the Mission doors and there was a demonstration, it was a rather modest thing, a couple of hundred chanting in front of the Mission after business hours. There were some Swiss, and some people from Geneva's international community. Walking through the crowd, I found the demonstrators good natured. The four Americans were there, chanting something in French about being nicer to Castro. They caught my eye and came over and said, well, we're not in the first row now. And I said, well, it's a bad compromise. I said, “Have you had enough of this, I'll buy you a beer, okay?” One of the four, to my certain knowledge, not very many years later entered U.S. government service—I won't say which agency—and also to my certain knowledge (because I kept running into him over the years) had a distinguished career with the American government. That's just a small thing, but gratifying nonetheless.

Q: A part of the growing up, but also it does represent the fact that if you can get relatively young Foreign Service officials to talk to people, they are going through this almost evolution to be able to talk and put things in reasonable terms, rather than black and white.

KIRBY: And it's not a face-less government, it's people. That's really an important part of what the job is all about.

Q: Did Africa intrude at all while you were there? The reason I ask this was I was somewhat to the south of you at this time in Yugoslavia, and we were getting involved in the Congo and the leftists around Europe were giving us a rough time over the Congo and Lumumba. Was there any reflection of that in Switzerland?

KIRBY: There really was not, Stu. Those issues really weren't very much manifest in Geneva at the popular or public level. I was aware of some of the things going on in Africa. I followed the cable traffic and several African leaders came to Geneva for one reason or another. People in power, people out of power...I remember, with colleagues, having lunch

with some of the prominent players in the Congo who were visiting Geneva. They often just wanted to go off in the countryside and relax so I met some of them and listened to their lore and to what was going on.

One other thing that I might say about the time in Geneva, which is a bit out of context in terms of the question you just asked. But my comments relate to the broader question of what Geneva was like at the time. Another group I enjoyed meeting and getting to know in Geneva were refugees from the 1956 Hungarian crisis. There were a few young people around the University of Geneva as undergraduates, and some were doing graduate work at the University or at the Institute des Hautes Etudes. There were a number of them who escaped with their lives as teenagers and came to the West. And I remember breaking bread a number of times with a few of them who had gotten scholarships to study in Geneva. One or two of them, as soon as they got their degrees, came on to the United States. At that time they were...they had a very big cross to bear. They couldn't return to Hungary where their lives would have been very much at risk. It was very interesting to get to know them and to hear about developments in Eastern Europe from them.

Q: Were you married at the time?

KIRBY: I was not married. I met the woman whom I later married while I was on that tour, however. My wife, Francoise, who was born in France actually grew up in Switzerland and was residing in Lausanne. However, she had started working for the French Foreign Service at their Embassy in Bern when I met her. I went to Geneva in August of 1961, and we met in January of 1963. We announced our engagement in July 1963 just before I left Geneva to come back for 10 months of full-time Hindi-Urdu study at the Foreign Service Institute. One of the things that I'd like to make a comment on here links up with what I said earlier—i.e., that when I came to the Foreign Service I was eager to go to Europe because I had never been there and I wanted to know more about Europe, but that I really hadn't thought of European affairs as a specialization for the Foreign Service. It was while I was in Geneva and traveling around Europe recalling the wider world and what I had

thought about then exotic Japan when I was there in Army days, that convinced me that ideas I had about doing something in the underdeveloped world, that convinced me that I wanted to try to seek a Foreign Service specialization in the developing countries. And so, it was while I was in Geneva, and with that thinking in mind, that I asked the Department of State about going to India. And that then led to my language training in the fall of 1963. As I said, I came back here for Hindi training. Then I returned to Switzerland at Christmas time during the language studies, just long enough to get married. And my wife returned to the United States with me.

Q: Going to Urdu-Hindi training, how did one look at this at that time as a career move?

KIRBY: I don't think I am a naive person, but at that time I was either very naive or more accurately, really didn't worry too much about “career moves,” to tell the truth. I really didn't factor that in and there have been other times along the way when I haven't factored it in very much. Even when I knew better. At the time, and maybe a few times later in my career as well, I was trying to seek out and do the things I wanted to do. And, as I said earlier, I wanted to do something in the developing countries and I was always fascinated by India. So it was intellectual excitement, and the excitement of travel to a far away and interesting work that caused me to push for South Asia and, specifically, India. India was a country near China, there was some Soviet influence there, it was the world's largest democracy—all of that made India a natural attraction. I guess to the extent that I factored career considerations in at all, I figured that if it's not a good career move then the Department should open its eyes and see that it became a good career opportunity. I think that was more or less my feeling.

Q: I think that this was very much the spirit of the time. Because really we went where we felt would be interesting and where we could do something and Europe was in a way a little too sophisticated, and you could get to Paris or Bonn and you could...

KIRBY: But, you're right. And that's why in saying I had some doubts whether my colleagues in the A-100 course would find that they really meant it when 18 out of the 30 said that it was “Africa for me!” I didn't mean to imply they were telling an untruth. I think they really meant it. My doubt was that they might find in time that they didn't all want to be there for the long haul. That it might just be a burst of initial enthusiasm. But I never, and I'm putting this in the context of what you have just said, I never for a moment doubted that was a genuine expression of sentiment that they wanted to go to Africa. Because that was the mood at the time—get out to far away places and do useful and interesting things. And not one of the 18 of the 30 was asking themselves, “Was that a good career move?” We didn't even know the phrase at the time...career move. It was, “Where is the action, what am I to be into, what's exciting?”

Q: I think all of us could look and it would be very obvious one of the great places to be in the 1930's was to be taking Russian language training. These were the towering figures in the Foreign Service. But obviously that was no longer quite the same thing. You were looking around for places that were interesting, where the action would be.

KIRBY: Some action, some interesting work in relationships that should matter to the U.S.

Q: You came back to take Hindi training. How long was that?

KIRBY: Ten months, full time.

Q: When they say “Hindi-Urdu” what does that mean? Are you learning two languages, or are they the same with different names?

KIRBY: The structure of the two languages is the same. Hindi derives from Sanskrit and the writing system is Sanskritic. Urdu was the language of the military camp around the 16th century. India had had various waves of invasion. Urdu was the “lingua Franca,” sort of devised on the run for the military camp as moguls, Persians, and others came to India. These outsiders picked up “Hindi” or Hindustani, the local north Indian language

based on Sanskrit, and using that same local sentence and grammatical structure began putting Arabic and Persian words into it. That, is an overly-simplified form, is how Urdu was developed.

Q: A little bit like Swahili, in a way?

KIRBY: How was Swahili established? People in Northern India will say that they speak Hindustani, Hindustani being an amalgam of Hindu and Urdu. In the same sentence you may use three or four Sanskritic words and Hindi words and a couple of expressions that are Arabicized. The spoken language is basically the same but with Urdu having expressions that are derived from Persian and Arabic especially. But the writing systems are different. As I said earlier, Hindi is writing in the Sanskritic script, while Urdu being more of the circles and whorls. It's not Arabic but has some resemblance to it.

Q: How did you find the training?

KIRBY: The language training? I found it good. I think the FSI system works. I had found the French training to be quite good a few years earlier. It gave one a very good structure and basis for going forward with the language. For Hindi and Urdu, they asked you to study both of the spoken languages. Then, if you're going to India, you study the writing system for Hindi and concentrate on Hindi expressions. If you're going to Pakistan then you study Urdu for the writing and reading. I thought that it was very good training. As it turned out, it was an oddity in a way, I was assigned as political officer to Madras in Southern India where they speak Tamil rather than Hindi or Urdu languages. Tamil is one of the prominent Hyderabad languages of the South. However, Urdu is spoken up in Hyderabad, the capital of Andhra Pradesh, one of the four states covered by the Consulate General in Madras. Later I would be assigned to New Delhi, where it was useful to have Hindi and Urdu.

Q: How many were taking the course with you and what was their outlook? As to where were they going? Because I think if some were going to Pakistan and some to India which

were at logger-heads with each other and had been, did that division show up in what you were doing?

KIRBY: I don't think that was a problem. There were two classrooms going at the time. To the extent possible, they tried to put people going to India in one course and people going to Pakistan in another. I think we had a good mix of students, including an interagency mix. In our class there were Andy Kay and I from the State Department and three or four people from USIS. The USIA people studied (it seems to me) about six months, and our course was ten months. At a certain stage it became just the teacher, and Andy and me. Andy had been in India before, in New Delhi, and he went to Bombay after the course, and I went to Madras. We used to meet with the other class occasionally. In the Hindi course we had Indians teaching, and I think next door in Urdu the teacher was from Pakistan. But everybody seemed to get along well at that time. We didn't discuss Indo-Pak issues. We did that in the area studies part of the course but not in the language course.

Q: Area studies course, how did you find that?

KIRBY: It was good, it was useful. Usually it was only half a day a week—an afternoon —as I recall. It, among other things, pointed you toward a reading list and gave you reading assignments that helped get you “in the mood” for the subcontinent. In those days, although not in as great number as FSI does today, they would bring in the occasional academic “ringer” from outside, many of whom gave memorable presentations. I would mention one, the late Joseph Campbell. Modern audiences have become familiar with him through his conversations with Bill Moyers on PBS and the book that came out of that. Earlier he wrote several very good books, one on mythology was called “The Masks of God.” He wrote a two volume set called “Indian Art in Asia,” which he put together from the masks of Zimmer, a German professor. Campbell was a great scholar on comparative religion and comparative mythology. But he was also a real scholar on India and Indian art, and my wife and I can to this day quote to you his concluding remarks, what he sketched out for us in a lecture here at the old FSI at the end of a long afternoon. And this was a

well-known scholar even then. We always appreciated his coming down to Washington. I think he was getting $100.00 for coming down from New York and spending a day down here. It couldn't have been for the money. But he really felt a personal responsibility, as a well-known professor, to see that we were well-trained. In fact I asked him about it at lunch. I said, “Why do you bother with us?” And he laughed and said, “Don't denigrate yourself, this place down here is training America's diplomatic arm and this is something that a university professor should be interested in and that I just love to do and I'm so pleased when they ask me.” And I said, “Well, we're glad you're here.” He was great. That was a useful course.

Q: Why don't we move on. You were assigned to Madras. Were you going to go somewhere else and then went to Madras?

KIRBY: I've forgotten what happened. Originally, I was to be assigned to Karachi. And then the Madras job opened, and they asked me whether despite the time I'd spent in Hindi-Urdu, I might like to go to Madras, where these languages were not spoken. I checked around with a couple of people who had been there and they were positive, so I said, “Yes, sure.”

Q: You were there in Madras from when to when?

KIRBY: Summer of 1964 to summer of 1966.

Q: What was the situation first in India? When you arrived how did you see it? And then what was the situation in Southern India?

KIRBY: It was a very interesting time. Jawaharlal Nehru had just died...the great Pandit Nehru, independent India's first Prime Minister had died in May of 1964. He had been in decline for some time; upon his death he was replaced by Lal Bahadur Shastri. It was a time of testing for the Indian Union in a way. The old Gandhi-Nehru magic had held everything together for the first 17 years of Indian independence. Now Shastri, a member

of the Indian National Congress Party hierarchy, but not part of that powerful, emotional Gandhi-Nehru tradition and line of succession, had been pushed forward by political party bosses who thought they would be able to dominate him, and push him around. That turned out not to be true, there were tremors and reverberations on the leadership front throughout 1964 and 1965. It was still an era during which people worried aloud regularly late at night about prospects for continued Indian unity. A few years before Selig Harrison had written his book India, the Dangerous Decades, and one of the questions it posed was whether or not India's fissiparous tendencies and the country's cultural, religious and political contradictions would not, in the end, drive the Union apart. 1964, to me, was not all that long ago. The importance of that year is that it fell only 17 years after Indian independence and the new India's unity was still being tested. Then, as now, India was a vibrant country. I always believed that the prospects for Indian unity for holding together, in pretty much the form we saw in 1964 were better than did some of other commentators. But, the prospects for India's continued unity, vitality, and economic and social development were perceived by perceptive Indian and foreigners alike to be important topics for discussion.

Q: If it were to split, what were sort of the conventional wisdom about how it might split up?

KIRBY: Oh, I think people had all sorts of partial, often not well thought out scenarios. They didn't necessarily sit around spinning precise blueprints. I think there was a feeling even then that the Sikhs would someday try to get either their own autonomous state or independence. Some felt that if certain elements in Kashmir, backed by certain elements in Pakistan, were successful, then maybe Kashmir would maybe become independent or parts of it would go with Pakistan. More generally, many people felt that these might eventuate a badly weakened central Indian government, with states nominally staying in the Indian Union but more or less going their own way on economic and social policy. Some thought that the Indian Union might sink into a rather loose, incoherent confederation. I would note again that I didn't particularly foresee that as the thing that was most likely to happen; I thought that the Indian Union and its institutions were strong

enough, and deeply rooted enough, to survive. But some people that worried about it—I'm not talking about people in the Embassy or in the American community particularly. Even local writers and newspaper editorials used to speculate along these lines. And certainly, when we arrived in Madras, the feeling of possible Tamil separatism was already in the air. In Madras, now called the state of Tamil Nadu, the Indian National Congress (the party of Ghent and Nehru) dominated the state government when we arrived. But indigenous Dravidian parties had begun to make serious inroads. There were several local parties. Some argued for Tamil Nadu's independence, although the mainline opposition Dravidian parties simply wanted a much broader measure of state autonomy than New Delhi wanted to grant. These were both practical and symbolic issues considered important in Tamil Nadu. We arrived in Madras in July, 1964, and in January, 1965, the state Madras broke out in serious anti-Hindi riots. (The language I had studied here in Washington.) The Indian constitution had said that English would be the country's “link language”, but there was in the mid-1960's a strong move (I've forgotten all the details frankly) in New Delhi and among the northern states to make Hindi the sole official language. Indeed, Hindi was slated to become the official language for all government communications and publications. This created rumbles of discontent throughout the south, but particularly in Madras state. First of all, the Dravidian political parties which wanted more state autonomy, which wanted to dislodge the Indian National Congress state government and replace it with one of their own, used the Hindi issue symbolically in their struggle for political power. But the issue's importance to the Tamil people was more than symbolic. Madras had one of the longest traditions of superior education and higher education in the country. Presidency College in Madras is the oldest university in India, for example. Historically, going well back into British times, the Madrasi had always provided many of the clerks and government civil servants to run the national administration. And even in 1965 it was extraordinary how many Madrasi occupied high government positions in Delhi. So the Tamils, who were being educated in both English and Tamil, in secondary schools and at the university level, felt very strongly that it would be an imposition for them to have to learn Hindi and to have to pass qualifying exams, in Hindi for government

employment. They were not about to stand still for a law or constitutional amendment that said that hereafter they would have to qualify in Hindi. So, to repeat, the language controversy had both practical and political/cultural overtones. Stoked by the politicians, many young people throughout Madras state were out busy burning busses and attacking such symbols of central authority as police stations and railway stations in January 1965. It was a rather destructive period. A few people lost their lives, but not many.

Q: The Consulate General in Madras covered what states?

KIRBY: The four states of Madras, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Mysore. The Consulate General still covers those four states, although the names of two states have changed. Madras is now known as Tamil Nadu, and Mysore goes back to a historic name, Karnataka. They speak the Kannada language in Mysore.

Q: What about Kerala, it was sort of a thorn in our sides at that time, wasn't it?

KIRBY: Kerala was of concern for the Indian Government in New Delhi, as well as for the U.S. and some other western countries, because it was feared that a Communist state government might come to power there through the ballot box. This would be the only place in the free world that that had happened. Later, Kerala did indeed elect a Communist government. But in 1965 Kerala, symbolically for the Indians, and symbolically for Washington and the West—indeed, for all those holding the line against a feared Communist advance in Asia—Kerala loomed somewhat larger than the reality of hindsight would suggest to some people that it should have done. In any case, Kerala had, and has, a fantastically interesting mix of people. They have one of the highest educational levels in India, an extraordinarily interesting communal, religious, cultural mix. There are many Christians in Kerala, many Muslims and, of course, a Hindu majority. Politics in Kerala at that time was highly partisan. There were a great many political parties, seemingly dozens of political parties—some of them quite small. The electoral combinations they would make prior to elections were quite creative and eclectic.

Q: You were the political officer?

KIRBY: Yes, I did two things at the Consulate General. As the political officer, I was reporting on the politics of the four southern states. I had four extraordinarily accomplished Foreign Service Nationals assisting me in that endeavor, one for each of the four states. In addition, I supervised the Consular section, which also had some very senior Foreign Service National employees. In Madras we had in all sections of the Consulate General many highly educated and very accomplished Indian employees. It was an excellent post. I am sure that is still the case today.

Q: Who was the Consul General?

KIRBY: When I was there it was Albert Franklin. My old friend, Bert Franklin, who, unfortunately, died a year or two ago.

Q: How did he operate? How did he have you operate when you were there?

KIRBY: Although it was an “old school” Foreign Service operation, the Consul General in a way, ruled with a relatively light rein. He had a deputy principal officer who coordinated day to day operations. In those days the Consulates in India were fairly large. And when you added the USIS presence, they were quite large indeed. It seems to me we had eight or ten Foreign Service officers in the Consulate General and five or six USIS officers. It was a large establishment. The Consul General made it clear he was in charge. He had studied Tamil and liked to give speeches in the Tamil language. He also liked to arrange cultural and representational events and meet Indian and American visitors. Beyond that, he left it to the staff to run their individual operations. So, I ran the consular section without much fuss. We had a lot of consular work. However, my bread and butter and major preoccupation was the political reporting. Fortunately, I liked to travel, and although the distances were fairly vast, I got around South India quite widely. I also accompanied the Consul General to the annual 2-3 day conferences in New Delhi that Ambassador Chester

Bowles would hold with the three Consuls General and selected members of their staffs to discuss where India was going, politically and economically, and U.S.-Indian relations. I found it a very good working atmosphere.

Q: I want to come back to work in Madras, but you mentioned Chester Bowles. I never served in India but I've had the impression that when Bowles and Galbraith and other people go there they immediately fall in love with India and become "India-centric". They tend to want everything for India and, not being very realistic, get almost dismissed back in Washington. What was your impression at the time about how Bowles looked at things and what you were getting from his office?

KIRBY: This is something that I've thought a lot about, both at that time and more recently. I used to think about it when I was in Madras. The question had far more relevance to me personally later on when I was assigned to New Delhi during the India-Pakistan War. I think that is a danger which diplomats have to fight against constantly, of becoming overly identified with the country to which you are assigned. India (and Pakistan) are both very seductive in many ways, and, of course, there have been some U.S. representatives who tended to identify strongly with one or the other. I don't know the situation today, but I used to tell colleagues that perhaps (as you suggested) in certain environments political appointees were especially susceptible to this. Foreign Service officers were not totally immune, of course. I think there was a tendency among many Americans assigned to India either to fall madly in love with the place or to be repelled by it and thus turned off. Striking a middle balance is often very hard, particularly for Americans. I always believed, nonetheless, that one has to make a daily effort to strike that balance. It's very important not to give Washington the feeling that the diplomatic mission in India or in Pakistan, or in country X, has become client-ridden—the old charge of clientitis. It's not easy. It's an occupational hazard but you have to try. Sitting down in Madras, far removed from New Delhi, I formed a great respect and admiration for Ambassador Bowles and I mean that very sincerely. He was an excellent Ambassador. Although I did not see him all that often, occasionally in the south, and perhaps once or twice a year in Delhi, I felt that he tended to

view India and Indian developments through rose colored glasses. I did not think his views were seriously off base, as some have said; indeed, most of what he foresaw as a vibrant Indian democracy continuing to advance economically, has turned out to be true. But he sometimes did not see the Indians as they really were and perhaps had a tendency to give them the benefit of the doubt on some issues of interest to the U.S. where they shouldn't have been given the benefit of the doubt. On the other hand, to be fair about it, he really did have a big story to tell in Washington: India and its development as a democratic country is one of the exciting phenomena of the second half of this century, I think. And his views on the extent to which India might serve as a model of political and economic development in Asia had considerable merit. There was a lot going on in India and in Asia that American policy makers needed to know and think about, and Bowles insisted on bringing all that to their attention. But on the other hand, he could have pounded the table with the Indians a few times.

Q: Could we talk a bit about being the political officer? Here is a vast area, you have a lot of parties. Indians are known for wanting to talk and put forth their points of view of all hues. I would think working as a political officer would be a very trying and difficult thing to do. Could you talk about being...?

KIRBY: Sure. As you know, under the generic political officer position rubric there are subsumed many different specific functions. The political officer's position in Madras was very different from the political officer slot I filled in Delhi a few years later. In Madras the job primarily consisted of reporting on political developments in southern India to New Delhi and Washington. It was fascinating because there was a lot going on. We talked earlier about the vast scope of what was happening in India at the time—i.e., the tension between the states and the central government and the latter's attempt to strengthen its position. India and Pakistan had a brief war in the autumn of 1965. And then in late 1965 or early 1966 Prime Minister Shastri died and was replaced by Indira Gandhi. So, there were many issues in play, both national and regional. You're quite right, the Indians—and I am really enormously fond of India and the Indians—not only talk a lot, but they speak

well. It's delightful to engage in conversations with Indian politicians, intellectuals, and, indeed, the common people. And often one would be exposed to people of modest station. One was exposed to Indians of a wide variety of backgrounds and attainments. The local village chief would sometimes startle you with his comments, his range of interests. One day, I was asked to go somewhere in Andhra Pradesh to dedicate a school. (It was great fun, you'd get that type of assignment quite often.) After dedicating the school, and making a speech, I went out into some of the nearby villages and talked to local leadership about the issues of the day and to check in on a couple of small development projects which the U.S. had financed. My assistants and I were received very courteously by the local leaders, the chief village elder, who was in his dhoti tucked up around his loins, with no shirt, but sporting a wonderful beard like yours, was a distinguished looking man. Sitting on the ground and speaking only Telugu, he offered me something to drink and courteously observed how nice it was that I had come and said how glad he was that relations between the U.S. and India were so good. He said he didn't get out of his village much but that he understood that the U.S. and India had a wide community of interests. I acknowledged that was so. And then his eyes flashed and his tongue sharpened, and he demanded, “When are you Americans going to wake up and so something to get the Pakistanis out of Kashmir?” And I laughed and said that Kashmir was very far away. He rejoined: “Not remote from my concerns, it's not, I'm a good Indian.” This conversation occurred in a village deep in southern India. The chief said he had heard that America was providing certain types of jet aircraft to Pakistan and said if that was true, then they certainly should provide even more sophisticated aircraft to India. And went on at some length and with some passion. I responded to all this, obviously trying to round the conversation off and to put the issue in appropriate perspective. This exchange was the last thing in the world I would have expected when I entered this remote village. Perhaps regional officials had put the chief up to it. But it is important to recall that through the transistor radio these local people were following national affairs. And the chief couldn't resist the opportunity, and he was right. In front of other village elders and the common people of the village, he wanted to be sure that he had spoken up for India.

Q: You don't get much of an opportunity in any country to talk to a diplomat of a major power and he was making his point.

KIRBY: Absolutely. He was making his point, and by his lights, doing it very well. We had a lot of contact with the local people in towns and villages throughout South India during my tour. While I didn't have much time available to do it, USIS used to ask me to undertake the occasional speaking tour. I did that once or twice in the South and once or twice later when I served in Delhi. In Bangalore, the capital of Mysore state, there are many universities and training institutes. Every couple of years USIS would arrange a week of lectures on U.S. culture, politics, and history by lecturers from the U.S. or locally acquired. They asked me to lecture on constitutional theory and constitutional law, on comparative government, and on U.S. foreign policy. That work led to on-going friendly relationships with university professors in Mysore during the remainder of my time in South India. I would look in on them when I passed through, sometimes to take local political temperature and sometimes just to exchange ideas on world developments. I enjoyed steady and full employment, I must say.

Q: Did you find that the University faculty that you would be talking to, so often coming out...I guess it's true today...out of the British experience and the French, tended to be left of the ruling party? Was this natural or not?

KIRBY: I wouldn't say that was universally true. There was in fact a mixture of orientations. There were some British-trained leftist intellectuals, of course, but I think that what leftist influence there was in the universities came more from some of the younger teaching staff trained by Marxists around the world including in the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries. This was particularly marked in the University of Calcutta and some of the other universities of north India. It was less marked in the universities of south India at that time, except for Kerala.

Q: One of the big pushes of the Kennedy time and moved over into part of the Johnson Administration which you were working for at this time, was an emphasis on making contact with the youth leaders...those who would be the great leaders of tomorrow. Did you find yourself a sort of "youth officer" or that type of thing?

KIRBY: I was not so designated, but I did a lot of that kind of work, yes. I was very much involved in helping choosing people for USIA's International Visitor Programs and for the Young Leaders travel program to the U.S. We chose promising politicians and young leaders in other fields. In Madras and at one or two other posts, I also sat on the board and interviewed people and made decisions on some of the Fulbright grantees, too.

Q: Was sort of Marxism the thing of the youth, on the campuses where you were? Or was this just one of the many?

KIRBY: Again, we're now talking about my time in Madras. Marxist influence was strong in Kerala and some parts of Andhra Pradesh. Elsewhere, Marxism was not particularly strong. In Madras, up in Hyderabad, in the institutions in Mysore state, and in Bangalore, leftist influence was not especially strong.

Q: Were we concerned about what the Soviet Union was doing down in your area?

KIRBY: We were concerned about what the Soviets were doing generally as they tried to expand their influence throughout India. At the policy level, that was an abiding U.S. concern right through the Cold War. On the other hand, we were not especially preoccupied about what they were doing in the south, as such. The Soviets had a large consulate in Madras, and so did the East Germans. We were concerned about some of their links around the country, and we did what we reasonably could to follow their cultural, commercial, and other activities and report on them as appropriate.

Q: This was during the time of our build-up in Vietnam. Did the Vietnam War come in as an issue much when you were there, or did that come later?

KIRBY: My memories of how Vietnam figured in the U.S.-Indian bilateral relationship are stronger from the time I spent in New Delhi, 1969-72 because being in the Indian capital caused me to hear about the issue day in and day out. We heard about Vietnam in the South, but the South tended to be more moderate in its' American basting than the North. In most times, on most things, the south was relatively more reasonable from the American point of view. We were criticized for Vietnam, but it was not as virulent as in some of the newspapers and among some of the peace groups of the North. The North had more fora—the World Peace Council and the organizations that you have floating around any large capital city. Calcutta had a strong leftist tinge; there was a lot of communist influence there. The Consulate General in Calcutta took its' lumps, being the target of regular demonstrations. But, we didn't have any of that in Madras. They just weren't as concerned about Vietnam down there. The south was generally more pro-American than the North, particularly Madras.

Q: You mentioned the Pakistani War up in the Rann of Kutch and in Kashmir. Was the United States identified with one side or the other?

KIRBY: We, in our own minds and policy, certainly identified with neither side. That was a brief war. Indians of course believed, as they always did that U.S. policy favored Pakistan since, prior to the conflict, we had had a military supply relationship with Pakistan, which was much greater than what we had with India. Indeed, we had the CENTO alliance relationship, and relations were generally closer with that country. The war didn't last long enough for us to get caught in any real squeeze between India and Pakistan, however. In southern India, apart from black-outs and driving with your lights off and that sort of thing, the war didn't really have too much of an impact. We were pretty far away from the war theater. We were conscious of it, and Indians were talking about it and getting the news bulletins on the radio but the conflict didn't have a major impact upon our relations with

South Indians. More broadly, it is worth noting that no Indian government, by definition, was ever happy for the U.S. to have any kind of relationship with Pakistan. To the extent that we gave the Pakistanis any kind of military or political and diplomatic support, the Indians would always claim that it was directed against them, even though that was not our intention. In any case, in the 1965 war, the U.S. did not provide additional military or other assistance to either side. Our diplomatic efforts were concentrated on trying to get the war stopped and toward the restoration of peace between India and Pakistan.

Q: Well then, you left there in 1966. Why don't we stop at this point? This is a good cutting off point. Summer of 1966 you went back to Washington.

KIRBY: Yes, I came back to Washington to the “India Desk?”

Q: Tell me what you covered.

KIRBY: I worked on the India Desk for about a year. It was a big operation. The office covered India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. I was one of three (we had larger staffing at that time) people who worked on India pretty much full time. I did a lot of the analysis of what was going on in India and in U.S.-India relations for the State Department's “seventh floor” and for the White House. I responded to many Congressional inquiries. I gave a few speeches, particularly in the Washington area, on South Asian affairs. I met with a lot of visitors to the State Department, both Indians and Americans. We had quite an out-reach program to the university community in the United States. We had a program which brought university professors to the Department from time to time to examine salient issues in U.S.-Indian relations. Along with INR, I was very active in helping to put that together and to sustain it. I wrote a speech which Vice President Hubert Humphrey gave publicly commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, which the Vice President warmly praised. I recall drafting responses from President Johnson to letters sent to him by Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Thus, it was a full range of relatively junior desk-officer duties.

Q: As a junior desk-officer dealing with India, can you give a little bit of the hierarchy?

KIRBY: Yes. This was the era when the Country-Directorate concept was being introduced. Prior to that for years and years and years, it had been the Office of South Asian Affairs which handled not only the countries I mentioned above but, also Pakistan and Afghanistan. Well, when the country directorates were formed in the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs, which is where we were all located, the South Asian office was split into two. One office, the one I was in, covered India, Nepal and Cyprus, as the latter country was still known at the time. (At least, I think it was still Cyprus in 1966-67.) The country director was Doug Heck, a senior officer who had been Political Counselor in New Delhi and Deputy Chief of Mission in Cyprus before becoming country director. He had a deputy, Mary Olmsted, who was senior economic officer for the country directorate and also the deputy to the country director. She had one economic officer who worked for her. On the political side, the senior man was Carlton Coon, who dealt primarily with India, but had some responsibilities, I recall, for Nepal as well. There were two India desk officers with him. At first they were Herb Hagerty and I. Then Herb left the office, to be replaced by Howie Schaffer. And then we had a desk officer, Gil Wing, for Nepal and Bhutan, and a desk officer, George Griffin, for Cyprus. We worked as a team, a team with extensive South Asia experience. Everybody there had had a very, very good grounding in South Asian affairs, a mix of academia, the Department of State and/or field experience.

Q: Were you there when they introduced the Country Director concept or had that just arrived?

KIRBY: I think it had been introduced just a few months before I came on board in September 1966. I seem to recall that the reorganization had occurred earlier that year.

Q: I've heard criticism that during Rusk's time as Secretary of State he put in the Country Director system which added another layer and in a way took away power from the

younger desk officers who had little...and added a more senior...but also added another layer. Was there any talk about this at the time?

KIRBY: I don't think there was much comment of that kind at that time. I think the talk, the theory, cut the other way in 1966. The whole idea of creating a Country Directorate, as it was advertised and explained to us, was to give more authority, not necessarily to the desk officer, but to the Country Director, and to get him/her and his staff more involved in policy making than apparently had been possible in the old office concept. The idea was to give more structure and intensity to the policy on Department's 4th and 5th floors where the country directorates were located, and to take a little bit away of the involvement in details of the 6th floor. Perhaps I'm anticipating you, but if we could look forward a bit, I might comment on how I think the Country Director concept has fared over the last 30 years. I speak as one who later was a country director, not for India-Nepal-Sri Lanka, but rather next door for Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh (PAB), and I felt very good about that experience, which occurred 1982-84. The NEA Bureau, where PAB was then located, permitted country directors and their staffs to operate pretty much in accordance with the original concept of making the country directorate the arena for hammering out the outline and details of policy in the country directorate and not make final policy, but it made the essential recommendations leading to policy decisions, and thus was intimately, and productively, involved in the policy process. In those bureaus where the country directorate concept has been allowed to work, I think it has worked very well. I'm not sure whether I had that perception as clearly as I do today, when I was a junior desk officer. But, I had no quarrel with the set-up as a desk officer. In those days, to the extent that there was any kind of layering or lack of room for maneuver by a junior desk officer, it had more to do with some slight over-staffing than it did with the organizational structure as such. Some of the Department's forced slenderizing over the years, driven initially by budgetary considerations, has validated the leaner staffing concept.

Q: You had that job from when to when?

KIRBY: I was in NEA/INS from September, 1966, to sometime in the summer or early fall of 1967. I liked the job greatly and admired and liked my colleagues; it was a tremendous group of people. Even after I left the office, we continued to see each other and do a lot of things together over the years. My game plan was to try to return to India after my Washington tour. As we have already discussed, I came onto the desk from India, and my plan was to try to go back to India. Moreover, I was encouraged by my superiors to do that. As happy as I was on the India desk, I wanted a slight break from South Asian affairs before going back to India, and I also wanted to get a view of a different side of the Department of State's business before I went overseas again. A job came open in the NEA Bureau's Personnel Assignment Office and I asked whether I could be considered for that, and I was accepted in mid-1967. For the last two years of my Washington tour, I was one of two NEA Personnel Assignments Officers. If memory holds on that, Stu, that was when I had the great pleasure of meeting you.

Q: During approximately this year, 1966-1967, were there any sort of issues you got a good bit of dealing with our relations with India?

KIRBY: It's a good question. In every other job I had later on, and I know we'll explore these later, I would be able to give you an unhesitating response. For the Asian desk job I can't think of any particular highlights. For reasons I won't bore you with here, U.S.-Indian relations were in one of many troughs during that period. As we discussed earlier, the India-Pakistan War of 1965 had once again reasserted the continuing salience and primacy of the Kashmir problem, and when I was on the desk, I did work on Kashmir issues among others. Intellectually, I found that fascinating. But there were no special high points. It was a period when we were at a relatively simple maintenance level in our bilateral relations. Indira Gandhi was the still relatively new Prime Minister and she was trying to consolidate her power. She was under attack from the “old guard” of the Indian National Congress, which was trying to wrest power from her. She was, as always, and not for very good reasons this time, suspicious of the United States which, she thought,

could be in league with her political enemies. She was also against the growing U.S. involvement in Vietnam. So, our relations were at maintenance level. We had a lot of economic assistance and cultural programs going forward in India, but there were no truly compelling war and peace, or major political issues, that really stand out for me during that period.

Q: This was your first time on a political desk sort of area, wasn't it?

KIRBY: It was the first time, and even though I haven't been able to identify major undertakings at the time, it was actually a critical period in my own formation. The experience on the desk certainly made me a different kind of Foreign Service officer when I went overseas again, or, at least, it made a vast difference in my political reporting. Being on the desk, being in the busy Country Directorate, and having daily association with the 6th and 7th floor of the State Department, I gained from experience a more acute sense of the policy relevance of the work we did in the field. It changed substantially my approach to reporting political developments abroad.

Q: It's almost essential. Did you get a different feel for the government's—the State Department's attitude toward India during that time, obviously looking around there's Pakistan and India. Did you get a feel for where it stood. Was it a "plague on both your houses" or well, this is Jacqueline Kennedy who was interested in India and India was a little more glamorous than Pakistan. Was there any of that?

KIRBY: That's a very interesting question. I think I did pick up some impressions, but they cut in a somewhat different direction from the way the question was put. The interesting and even extraordinary thing is that the talented group of people working in the two country directorates heading South Asia, and many of their superiors on the State Department's 6th and 7th floors, strongly believed that South Asia was important and that what happened in India, Pakistan, and some of the smaller regional countries might have a lot to do with how the third world developed generally. They thought this could

have implications for U.S. security interests, as well as for democratic and economic development, and these were important in the making of the modern world. These sentiments were shared, incidentally, in the Kennedy and Johnson White House. I think that it was largely the people in the two NEA country directorates who kept South Asia front and center in our bureaucracy and in our policy process. This was as true of those who worked on Pakistan as of those who worked on India. If you worked on India or on Pakistan, you might differ about which of those two countries was at fault in a given skirmish, but there was a broad agreement among the people who worked in both areas that that part of the world was important. We all thought so. I think, had there not been that kind of dedication and commitment of the people who worked on these matters daily, at the working level in the Department, U.S. relations with those countries would not have gotten the kind of high-level attention salience that they did regularly in our government. Because the American people, by and large, were not that interested in South Asia. And in successive White House Administrations, interest waxed and waned. President Kennedy was very, very interested in India and his advisors were, too. As part of his inheritance of issues and advisers from Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson became interested in South Asia, too, but not every administration over later years was as interested. Many later argued that the State Department was putting more emphasis on India, particularly, than U.S. interests really required.

Q: That's a good answer. You then came down to Personnel. When we do these interviews, part of the thing is to get a feel for how the State Department works. In many ways, Personnel seems to be a mundane thing. Actually, it is a very high profile within the Foreign Service. This is, in some ways, what gets the right people to the right place at the right time. Everyone is vitally interested in this. So this is why somebody might move from a desk to a Personnel job. In business, this would be completely inconceivable but how did you find the Personnel system? You were there from 1967-69.

KIRBY: Yes. Roughly the summer of 1967 until the summer of 1969. First of all, I enjoyed the work. I had had some personnel experience in the Army and in private industry, and

maybe that's one of the things that prompted me to ask to take that job. The other thing was, as I said earlier, that I wanted to see a different side, I wanted to learn about the structure of the State Department and how the guts of the thing worked, and it seemed to me the Personnel side of it was absolutely key. That is, implicit in what you said. Personnel, in the State Department, looms larger than in many institutions because the State Department is sui generis and runs itself. There are some aspects of Personnel that are quite complex. But your exact question was what? I'm sorry.

Q: My question was, basically, how did you find it and how did it operate at that time?

KIRBY: At the risk of seeming like an old fogy which I don't think I am or want to be, I thought the personnel assignment system worked pretty well at that time. I have also worked on Personnel matters in later years in at least one brief incarnation. My view is that it worked better in the late 1960's than it has at almost anytime since. I thought that the uneasy balance that was in existence at that time between Central Personnel (where you were working, for example) and the individual regional Bureaus was about right. Now the fact that none of us then agreed that it was exactly right...that I for example, sitting in the NEA Bureau, thought that we should have a little more authority on making final decisions than the Central Personnel people, while you and your colleagues, I am sure, saw it the other way around, suggests to me that the balance was about right. From our mutual dialogue and dialectic, we made reasonable assignment decisions most of the time.

Q: I think at that time there was much more of a balance. Rather than letting it fall, as it usually happens, into the Bureau's hands, that many people fall between the cracks. And that it's not that responsive a service, it's a little too “old-boyish”.

KIRBY: I thought the system then had a good balance; I agree with you. I thought the assignment decisions were at that period well thought out and defensible on all sides. The final Personnel decisions then were as well done as I've ever seen them in the Foreign Service. American society and its institutions were different at that time. The

State Department, understandably, like all institutions, mirrored society at that time. Maybe we were a less litigious, a less complaining people at that time; I think there were fewer challenges to the assignments that were made then. And less bickering. Some assignments were challenged, to be sure, but on the whole I thought things went better than that much of the time since. But that's a very tentative and hesitant judgment, since I have not been involved in Personnel matters during most of the more recent period.

Q: Did you have any sort of cases that you can think of, problems or getting someone to a job, or someone out of a job that come to mind?

KIRBY: Well, there were a few such things along the way. Yes, inevitably there were people who thought that certain jobs were theirs by “divine right”. And, of course, there were at least some people who simply didn't understand the complexity of the assignments system. I think of one man, who had decided he wanted to go to a certain post in South Asia, and he wanted a very particular job. I had read his file pretty carefully and had decided that while I thought he would be good for job “A”, he was not quite right for job “B”, and told him if you were willing to accept “A” he would get his first choice among posts. I told him why he would not get job “B” at that time but speculated that he might be a viable candidate for it at some future date. He became very, very angry. In snide tones he suggested that just maybe none of us knew our business and by God, he would expose the whole system, etc. The easy thing would have been for me to say, “It was nice to have seen you, go to another Bureau because you ain't for us.” But I thought that the fellow was intelligent, that he had a good mind and considerable promise. I thought that he hadn't quite ripened within the system and that maybe he could be helped. I hadn't been around the Service all that long myself, but I used with him a technique that I had used in private industry. I sort of wanted to see if he could be saved. I said, in a very tight tone, very deliberately, “It's lunch time, we're going down to the cafeteria together for a bite and then we're going to take a very long walk around the block and during all that time you're mostly going to listen to what I have to say.” And he sat back surprised, and said, “OK, I'd like to do that.” That day I gave him what I considered, for the mutual benefit of himself

and the Foreign Service a “Dutch-uncle” talk on how you deal with people. I said, “You know if you talk to most people around here the way you talked to me, you will be out on your ear and you probably should be. But I think you're basically a smart guy, with some listening and some maturation, I think you could make a pretty good FSO.” Well, to make a long story short, the man said, “Yes, I've over-done it and I recognize it and apologize for it. I had no right to demand that the Bureau that you represent take me for any job. What I want to say is that if you and the Central Personnel system agree on me for any job, either “A” or “B”, at the post in question, then I will take it.” Then I talked with one of your colleagues in the central system and indicated that we could use him, not in the job he originally wanted, but in the other one. He made a pretty good Foreign Service officer, I think, as witnessed by the looking at the Foreign Service promotion lists over the years and by running into him every few years and chatting about his progress.

Q: I think this is one of the things that having an assignment process run by serving officers makes a tremendous amount of sense rather than a Personnel Specialist who doesn't know, the position suffers.

KIRBY: I agree with you. It's an illusion to think that a Personnel Specialist sitting year after year at the same desk, and without field experience, can do the job effectively for the Foreign Service. Obviously, many Washington-based Personnel Specialists are excellent in their work, and we need their skills. On the other hand, on the assignments side, you need people who know the “texture” of the Service.

Q: One thing about being in Personnel, you usually can have control over your next assignment. My time, I put myself in Saigon, I wanted to see “the elephant”. Anyway, at that time did you get involved, it wasn't your area, but you were in one of the Bureaus, the increasing demands for sending young officers, particularly to Vietnam. Did that impact upon you at all?

KIRBY: I will be very frank in saying to you now something I said to my wife on a number of occasions, and also to close friends in the Service over the years: I was always surprised that I wasn't tapped for service in Vietnam, because I spoke French. And given the number of jobs in Vietnam in the middle grades, I assumed it was going to happen. But, I was never sounded out about a job in Vietnam, and I didn't go in and volunteer. I was not then or now against the war in Vietnam. I had no philosophical problems with being assigned as an officer in Vietnam. What would have been excruciating for me, however, and I felt it strongly at the time, would have been either to leave a young family behind, or to a position at a post in a neighboring country. So, that is why I would never have volunteered, not that they were asking for volunteers particularly. It would have been a real wrench for me. But, you know, let's face it; in the end you do what you have to do. I am simply glad that no one asked me and that I did not have to face the possibility of being apart from my family.

Q: So, where did you go?

KIRBY: In the summer of 1969, I went to New Delhi and was there until the autumn of 1972.

Q: What was your job there?

KIRBY: I was a political officer on the external affairs side of the Embassy's political section. Because of my growing background in South Asian affairs, I had asked to have the job which would cover relations between India and its near neighbors, except for China. We had a China hand handling Sino-Indian relations. My position was multi-faceted. I handled India's relations with all its near neighbors in South Asia—Pakistan, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal, I also had Bhutan and Sikkim. In addition, I followed developments in Kashmir. I also covered political-military affairs and, as a subset of that, military-scientific affairs. Regarding the latter, we had a science attach#, but he wasn't interested in or terribly oriented toward Indian nuclear policy or Indian missile

technology. Thus, the little bit of reporting we did in those fields, I did myself. We were terribly interested in trying to get some sense of what India was doing in missilery and whether they were going to develop a nuclear weapons program. So, to the limited extent then possible I tried to follow those matters, although it wasn't easy for an Embassy political officer to do that. I also handled some Indo-U.S. related issues, particularly those that impinged on the India-Pakistan nexus. If a middle grade officer was assigned to take to the Foreign Office a message on such issues, I was often the one to handle it. So, I did get into some of the strictly Indo-U.S. matters as well.

Q: What was your impression of the role of India? Was she a colossus over the neighboring countries, including Pakistan?

KIRBY: Whatever the facts, and whatever India's actual intentions, India was so perceived by some neighboring countries, especially the two smaller ones, Nepal and Sri Lanka. I think they spent their days worrying about what they perceived as the Indian colossus. My own perception at the time was that India did fairly regularly put the squeeze on Nepal, largely through its trade and transit policy. India was concerned about the defense of its northern borders with China and wanted the smaller Himalayan states to be oriented toward New Delhi. The China-India War of 1962 had occurred not very long ago and security concerns relating to China was not a central focus of Indian policy. The Nepalese had to bring everything up through Calcutta port and the Indians used their trade and transit policy to try to keep the Nepalese in line on other matters. This was similar to Pakistan's use of the trade and transit card to try to keep Afghanistan in line, to the extent possible. I think India's sheer size and weight worried its neighbors. As a general proposition, I don't think India was unduly aggressive during most of the period I was in New Delhi, although once overt rebellion erupted in East Pakistan, India vigorously supported the Bengalis in their successful effort to break away from West Pakistan. India was not shy about using its diplomatic and economic muscle where it could effectively

do so in the region, but, I think maybe the perception of an active, overbearing colossus outran the everyday reality.

Q: Before we move into the India-Pak War, which was the war really because that really changed the face of the 1971 one. A little about India's role. On the political-military side did you have anything to do with India as part of the tripartite group that was supposedly policing in Vietnam?

KIRBY: I didn't have anything to do with that. My colleague who handled Asia generally during most of my time there, Don Anderson, had that as part of his area of responsibility. Moreover, by the time I arrived in Delhi in 1969, the war in Vietnam was pretty well advance, and the Tri-Tripartite Commission in Vietnam loomed less large on the political and diplomatic horizon than it had earlier in the 1960's.

Q: It really wasn't very much. I was in Saigon in '69-70. It was just the Indians were not seen as being very friendly toward the United States.

KIRBY: They weren't helpful at all. During my time in Delhi both their private diplomacy and their frequent public statements on Vietnam were quite unhelpful. I remember that our Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission spent a lot of time trying to counter some of the things Indian officialdom were saying about Vietnam and the things that were appearing in their press, much of that inspired by the Indian Government. The Indian Government's press spokesman at the time regularly put out a lot of stuff on Vietnam that the United States Government and we in the Embassy found very unhelpful.

Q: Looking at this and you're dealing with the Indians at this particular time, what did you feel was the motivating force behind this antipathy towards the United States and Vietnam? I mean it seemed to run throughout the whole Indian thing.

KIRBY: I think there were two or three inter-related aspects to the Indian position. First, was India's self-assumed role of being a spokesman within the non-aligned movement, for

the down- trodden, for the erstwhile colonial world and what have you. They saw Vietnam in that context. The U.S. saw one independent country, South Vietnam, as, essentially, being infiltrated, and ultimately invaded by its neighbor from the north. The Indians, however, chose to interpret the issue as being one of a small Asian country that had been dominated by, first the French, and now the Americans, which was trying to throw off the last vestiges of colonialism and bring about national unification. It wasn't that way in our case. Whether Indian officials genuinely perceived the issue that way, or whether they simply chose to see it that way for policy reasons because it suited their role in the UN and in the non-aligned movement of speaking up against great power pressure may be open to question, of course. One may continue the discussion by asking the Indians. They never found a way to speak out against Soviet pressure on other countries. That brings me to the second point I wanted to make about the strands of Indian policy. Another motivation for the Indians, was something we referred to earlier—i.e., their security concerns about China. As the Indians perceived it, then and now, the overwhelming security threat is from China. Indian policy and diplomacy have always been designed to keep the Chinese at bay. And central to that was staying friendly with the Soviets and looking for Soviet diplomatic and other kinds of support where they could get it. Because of the perception of China they never wanted to be out of sync with the Soviets on Vietnam or anything else.

Q: They had the Soviet card to play.

KIRBY: Yes. They would never get too far out of step with the Soviets on Vietnam. In general, if you look back at what the Indians were saying about Vietnam, it was usually consistent with the line the Soviets were taking on Vietnam. And I think that the third element in Indian Vietnam policy—and maybe this is a subset of the first element—India then and now perceived itself as a big Asian country that should speak up for the rights of other, selected Asian countries when the latter are engaged in conflicts with the West. And, so it follows from all that, that India spoke for Vietnam against the American power, located so far away from Asia that, from the Indian viewpoint, it should not have involved itself in Asian affairs. I don't defend any of that and used to vigorously contest it with my

Indian friends, as you can expect. However, I think those are the three elements that were driving Indian policy on Vietnam.

Q: Was there also an element that the Indians had caught...I don't know what to call it...the British "upper class virus" or something from their educational system and their leadership that the Americans are upstarts and uncouth, uncultured and over here sort of anything like that?

KIRBY: There may have been some aspect of that but I think, interestingly, and this may be a fourth element in the Indian attitude toward the U.S., it worked slightly differently, as Indian officials sought to "play" the U.S. to India's advantage. Nehru profoundly believed, and used to tell his close associates, that the way to get the attention of the Americans and to get things out of them is by calling on them and their country to live up to their better selves. He suggested that when Americans can be brought to feel that they are betraying their own principles or mankind's principles, then if you scream at them loudly enough and kick them in the shins, they will apologize and make up for it by doing what it is you want them to do. He tended to believe that was the way you dealt with Americans. That may have been naive on his part, but there were times when we gave Nehru and others reason to think so. I think we ourselves have matured greatly as a people. I think that a long time ago we began to get out the word that you don't get to be friends with the U.S. by kicking us in the shins or otherwise defaming us. There are those who say we should have done it earlier. I think there was that aspect to Indian attitudes toward the U.S., and that it took too many years for that to die among certain elements of Indian leadership. India doesn't believe that today, incidentally. By the way, I should interject here that I was a great friend of India when I was in India and that I remain one now. In saying the foregoing things bluntly, I would not wish to detract from my great interest in and friendship for India. It is one of the countries and one of the peoples for which I have the highest regard. I don't think my wife and I have ever been happier than during our two tours in India. But we always believed that where we agreed with Indian policy, we should be quick to say so, and that where we thought that Indian policy was

misplaced or misdirected, we should say that, too. Friends have to be able to argue out their differences. We were considered, while we were there, to be genuine friends of India. I don't want to presume too much here, but people, both Indians and Americans, were good enough to say that they thought we struck a good balance. We were always quite clear that we were American spokesmen, that while our empathy for India was obvious, where differences arose, we should be quick to speak up vigorously, and repeatedly, for U.S. interests. That is what I think you have to do.

Q: As a political officer at the Embassy, how did you operate? Maybe not a typical day, but what did you do?

KIRBY: That's a very good question. First of all, I regularly saw a tremendous number of people. I made quite a point of cultivating all the people in the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs who dealt with the areas in which I had some interest and responsibility. There was a division of the foreign office that dealt uniquely with Pakistan. The Northern Division dealt with India's northern border, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and some other areas to the east. And then there was the division that dealt with Sri Lanka, Burma and the Indian Ocean. I really got to know people from junior desk officers up to their directors who were our Assistant Secretary equivalent. I saw a lot of those people. I would schedule office appointments fairly frequently, I would invite them to my home. They were very nice; as they got to know us, many of them invited us to their homes. The Indian officials are not only very accomplished diplomats, but like the Indian people generally, they are generous and warm-hearted. So, one got around and saw a lot of people. Sometimes it was just chatting to “cultivate the garden,” sometimes to explore specific things that Washington wanted to know about, or that I thought they ought to know about as to where Indian policy was going regarding Pakistan or how they were reacting to a given policy move in Nepal, let's say. I also got around—I cultivated widespread contacts in other Embassies. And, again, this was from Third Secretary to Ambassador, most of whom were always good enough to give me some time. I especially got to know the people in the embassies and the high commissions of the countries that I was working on—Pakistan, Sri Lanka,

Nepal, and Afghanistan. I spent a lot of time with people in those embassies to get their perception of how their bilateral relations were with New Delhi. But I also found in New Delhi, as I had elsewhere, that the British, Australian, and Canadian High Commissions, and the French Embassy were all very good value. They all were very ably staffed, with very gregarious and nice people. In general terms, they were all interested in some of the same things that the U.S. was interested in in that part of the world. (Apart from India and its near neighbors, I was also covering Kashmir and Indian nuclear policy.) So, that was another part of the "network" if you will. I became particularly busy during the prolonged India-Pakistan crisis of 1971. It began roughly in January of 1971 and then, in some ways, reached its culmination on December 3, 1971, when war broke out between India and Pakistan over the question of whether what was then East Pakistan would become independent Bangladesh. The result of that war was that Bangladesh emerged as a new nation. During that year of prolonged crisis, I spent at least half my day (and these were very long days stretching into the evenings most times) given over to reporting and analysis, writing telegrams to Washington about what seemed to be going on in the India-Pakistan nexus. I repeatedly commented on the prospects for war and how the East Pakistan thing was likely to play itself out. I tried to predict (a) what would actually happen and (b), to lay out some of the markers as we saw them in New Delhi with respect to some of the pitfalls and challenges for American policy as the crisis unfolded. So, 1971 was a non-stop year.

Q: Why don't we talk about how 1971 developed. Bearing in mind we are talking about people who will not be as familiar with these transcripts—there will be many other events around the world and this was one of them. How this played out and how you saw your role and what the Embassy was doing at this time?

KIRBY: Briefly put, there had been dissidence in what is today Bangladesh and then was East Pakistan, ever since Pakistan was created in 1947 when the British left the subcontinent. The two wings of Pakistan were separated by the land mass in India. The Bengali Muslims in East Pakistan had the same religion as their West Pakistan

counterparts, but their culture and lifestyle were very different. By 1971, there had long been a dissident movement. Without going into more detail than you want, I would note that long-time Pakistani President Ayub Khan, who had been a fairly firm leader, had recently been replaced by another general, Yahya Khan. There began to be in 1969-1970 and early 1971 frequent and publicly audible questions about just how long Pakistan would be able to hold on to its eastern wing. That was one of the irritants in India-Pakistan relations, but there were many others, as well. The perennial Kashmir question continued to boil and problems between India and Pakistan on India's western border often produced tension. In January 1971 there was an airplane hijacking in Kashmir which caused India-Pakistan relations to plummet further. We did a lot of reporting and analysis on that. I remember telling my superiors in Delhi and in Washington that that incident would prove to be far more important in terms of the way the subcontinent would develop in the period ahead than the simple fact of the hijacking itself. It was bound to add considerably to bilateral tensions.

Q: Why did you feel this? Hijacking are hijacking...

KIRBY: One thing I mentioned earlier only in passing was that reporting on Kashmir was one of my responsibilities. Each of the embassy officers working on external affairs also had a domestic component to his portfolio. And my domestic reporting responsibilities were two-fold. One was Kashmir politics because although it was domestic, it was also part of the India-Pakistan imbroglio. (Because I had served in Madras earlier, I reported on South India matters as seen from the New Delhi perspective.) Kashmir was an active part of my dossier, and I had been to Kashmir a number of times. In both Pakistan and India the top leaders were still feeling their way. Prime Minister Gandhi had been in power for a while, but as I said earlier, she was in the middle of a leadership challenge from the “old guard” leaders in India. Yahya Khan, a less strong leader than the man he had replaced, Ayub Khan, was already being criticized for having less moxie, less control in Pakistan. It was apparent to me that each of these somewhat weakened leaders was going to have to “hang-tough” on anything that happened vis-a-vis each other. To make a long story short,

that is what happened. The posturing over the hijacking on both sides further clouded the air in India-Pakistan bilateral relations and deepened the mood of pessimism in the subcontinent. However, if things had not begun to bubble in East Pakistan at the time, I think the hijacking incident might have just passed into history and never been heard of again. As it was, it was just one of the elements in the gathering storm.

Q: Just a mind-set as an Indian hand, had you and maybe your other Indian hands a long time ago taken a look at the map and the demographics and written East Pakistan off as something that eventually would go, and where did you think it might go?

KIRBY: I was privileged to be able to make an official trip around East Pakistan in March of 1970 from New Delhi. One of the things people in my job did was to visit the territory in neighboring countries for orientation. Similarly, the India watchers in our embassy in Pakistan used to visit us. Dennis Kux and Steve Palmer used to come over and consult on India. So, at the invitation of the Consul General and his staff in Dhaka and with the concurrence of Ambassador McFarlane in Rawalpindi; I went over for a fairly lengthy trip to East Pakistan in March of 1970. The Consulate General couldn't have been nicer in showing me around. I shared my perceptions with our diplomats in Dhaka and went back to Delhi and told Ambassador Keating and his staff that over the long haul the Pakistani government would not be able to hold the eastern wing. I said I didn't know how long it would take, but that cauldron was bubbling. The Consulate General in Dhaka had perceived this too, of course. I said that it was just a matter of time. I don't want to mislead you, I didn't say it was going to happen during my watch in Delhi or that it was going to happen within the next year. I do remember saying I could not put a time on it, but that the dissidence was farther advanced than some might think. I speculated that the developing tension would pose important policy questions for Washington. I said I thought the U.S. should reflect on how we would relate to the crisis when the balloon finally went up. I wasn't predicting that it would go up in 1970 or '71, but I did say I thought it would go up relatively soon. As a matter of fact, as it turned out, it was almost a year to the day that I said that in Delhi that the crisis actually exploded on the 25th or 26th of March 1971,

when the riots started in Dhaka and the Pakistani army responded. From the Pakistan government's point of view, it was all down hill from that point on. Those who were trying to bring independence to Bangladesh saw it in very different terms, of course.

Q: From your point of view, was independence of Bangladesh the only real option or did you see India maybe making a move to take it over?

KIRBY: Of India wanting to incorporate East Pakistan into India? I saw no move in that direction at all, although it is a good question. I saw no move in that direction, and I am absolutely persuaded that that was the last thing that would be on any sane Indian policy maker's mind. Rhetorically, there may have been some Bengalis in India's predominantly Hindu West Bengal who argued that East and West Bengal should be reunited in the Indian Union. There were doubtless some Bengalis who thought it would be nice to get the old historic Bengali cultural entity back together. I don't know what the Indian archives will show, and I may be proved wrong some day, but I can't believe serious Indian policy makers would have considered taking East Bengal on for two reasons. One of the greatest problems of governance for New Delhi at the time was West Bengal and Communist influence in West Bengal. Delhi had great problems with that. Mrs. Gandhi's party, the Indian National Congress, was not able to form a government in Calcutta during part of that period. They would not have wanted to add that impoverished East Bengal, which had some leftist effervescence of its own, to the Indian Union. The other, and perhaps more important, thing was that the Indian Government would not have wanted to add 100 plus million Muslims to the Indian Union at that time. Bluntly put, I'm absolutely convinced of that.

Q: How did this thing play out? You had your hijacking, you were seeing the atmospherics, there were riots in the beginning of 1971.

KIRBY: And the Pakistani army cracked down rather firmly in East Pakistan. That then led to an enormous number of refugees from East Pakistan into India. I'm still calling it

East Pakistan at this stage, because that's what it was up until late 1971. In the refugee numbers game it's very hard to know exactly where truth lies. We were hearing upwards of 11-12 million refugees from East Pakistan flooding into India by mid-1971. The UN system and USAID got engaged in feeding many of these refugees. I'd say there were a very large number of refugees. The Indians—I don't know whether they still deny it, although they denied it at the time—got involved in the very early stages of supplying the Mujahideen, the “freedom fighters” in East Pakistan. They supplied them weaponry and other types of support, and although Indian policy makers denied it for a long time, the Indian army itself supported the Mujahideen along the frontier and perhaps across the frontier from time to time. The thing that validated such support in Indian eyes was the flow of refugees into India. My own belief is that the Indians, convinced that the Pakistanis couldn't hold it and shouldn't hold East Bengal probably would have assisted the process once dissidence broke out even without the refugees. In their own eyes, however, the Indians were morally justified doing it once the refugee flow started. In the Indian Government's view, the conflict in East Pakistan had to be brought to an end quickly and successfully, i.e., with the emergence of a new, independent political entity in East Pakistan.

Q: While this was happening...here we have a series of Foreign Service posts that are involved. One is our Consulate General in Dhaka, our Consulate General in Calcutta which was in the receiving area also in the Bengali area of India, the Embassy where you were and our Embassy in Rawalpindi/Islamabad. Within our business, how did you see the various actors, our people, looking at this thing?

KIRBY: Number one, all things considered, I think there was pretty good coordination during that year among the U.S. Foreign Service posts in the region. There was a fair amount of travel back and forth so that we could, to the extent possible, share information, be on the “same sheet of music,” etc. I used to go to Pakistan fairly frequently during that period to brief on the view from Delhi. Ambassador Carol Laise, in land-locked Nepal, had a very real reason to worry about overland her life-line from the port of Calcutta up to Kathmandu. She asked me to come up to Kathmandu fairly frequently during that year of

1971 to talk about war/peace prospects. Some from our Embassy in Pakistan came over to see us in Delhi. There was good coordination in the field, I think. But you're wondering how did the various American officials in South Asia see the developing crisis, is that it?

Q: But you are pointing out something that is very important. One can get the impression, when one is not an India-Pak "hand" that these two embassies would sit and glare at each other, XXX this is not what you're telling me.

KIRBY: This is important. I think historically, that's the way it often was, alas, between our embassies in New Delhi and Rawalpindi-Islamabad. Although that 1965 war was a short-lived conflict, sitting down in Madras, looking at the telegrams from our embassies in the two countries, I sometimes had the impression they were talking about two different wars. You did very much sense a "we-they" kind of orientation. I will not say to you there weren't sometimes differing perceptions during the 1971 war, because there were. (I'd like to come back to that later.) Nor am I going to say that, during our time it was perfect, not like the "bad old says"—it wasn't. I do believe, however, that during this period we're talking about, to the extent possible embassies New Delhi and Rawalpindi-Islamabad made an effort to be objective, i.e., not to be driven by clientitis. I did say to my Deputy Chief of Mission, Galen Stone, to Lee Stull the political counselor, and to Ambassador Keating, that I thought we should be especially careful with Washington, not to be perceived to be falling into Indian Government traps, if you will, and becoming spokesmen for the Indian point of view. In Delhi the embassy team agreed that we were all working for the American government and that to the extent possible our two embassies should avoid taking pot shots at each other, as had sometimes been done in the past. Although I'd have to go back and look at the files to be absolutely sure, I do believe during that prolonged crisis the two embassies were not taking nasty cracks at each other in telegrams. I don't know what people said to each other on the telephone to Washington, but we didn't telephone that much in those days, in any case.

Q: Particularly we had in the earlier period people of high caliber, high powered people—Chester Bowles, George Ball in Washington, Galbraith—a lot of ego was involved.

KIRBY: A lot of ego was involved in the 1960's. I think that was mercifully played down in the 1971 crisis. In retrospect I think that Embassy New Delhi, and Embassy Rawalpindi conducted themselves very well. Part of the proof of this is that not only did the two embassies engage directly all during the crisis by traveling back and forth and so on, but that once the crisis was over and U.S. relations plummeted with both sides, Pakistan and India, relations between the two embassy teams continued to be very, very good in 1972 and beyond. We continued to visit Rawalpindi and they continued to visit us in New Delhi. We continued to try, as much as possible, to arrive at common perceptions etc., to the extent possible. Now, did perceptions differ? Well, they did to some extent, of course. Each embassy, I think in a very professional way, put forward its point of view. As you would expect, there were some differences. By and large our Embassy in Pakistan was, understandably, reporting what the Pakistanis were saying to the effect that, “you Americans are our allies and you must recognize that the Indian colossus is aiding some dissidents to pinch off half our country.” As a general proposition, Embassy Islamabad didn't fall into that trap of seeing the crisis in East Pakistan as largely Indian-inspired. But still, the voice of our Embassy in Pakistan would have been on the side of trying to get the Indians to stand down and cease their assistance to the East Pakistan dissidents. From Delhi, we too argued with the Indian Government that it shouldn't be involved militarily, etc. The U.S. Government said that to them in Washington, and we said that to them in Delhi. But, we also reported to Washington from Delhi our view that the die was cast, that inexorable process was in train with the certain result that East Pakistan would become independent. While our Embassy couldn't say exactly when the denouement would come, when the crisis began to unfurl we said, “There is going to be an independent Bangladesh.” This was not a value judgment on Embassy New Delhi's part—that's simply the way we were convinced it was going to turn out. We said that it probably was going to come about by war, but that one way or another it was happening. And, then we offered

our views on how the U.S. should relate to the crisis. I think the view from our embassy in Pakistan was that maybe it wasn't inexorable, if the Indians didn't push things too far. These were honest and reasonable perceptions, it seems to me. I think they both were highly professional perceptions and judgments.

Q: Now this was the high Kissinger period. What were you getting from there? Because Kissinger was always looking at things in a completely different light than say maybe our embassies. He was thinking in terms of bi-products of American, Soviet, Chinese relationships. Were you getting anything, cold water saying you guys are off the track?

KIRBY: What we were getting from Washington was, in the vernacular, “tell those Indians to behave!” You've doubtless read Kissinger's memoirs where he writes about the “tilt” toward Pakistan and the reasons for it. I can't speak to private communications that the Ambassador might have had with Washington that I didn't see, but in the normal cable traffic, I really think it was simply, “tell those Indians not to get involved militarily, not to make things more difficult for Pakistan”—a fairly reasonable approach on the whole. Which is what we in Embassy Delhi believed we should be saying too. We believed that the U.S. should be trying to prevent war. We didn't think it would work necessarily, but we did it with stout heart—trying to talk the Indians out of complicating Pakistan's crisis. Our view was that if the Indians thought it was an inexorable process, then they should let the inexorable process run its course without getting aggressively involved or otherwise roiling the waters. That was the general policy line from Washington—to do what we could to prevent conflict in the subcontinent. With a possibly different view of the likely outcome, we in Delhi believed this to be in general the right policy line. Our major differences with Washington came later when war finally broke out. At that point we in Delhi wouldn't have wanted the U.S. to tilt as openly towards Pakistan as was done.

Q: How did you find Ambassador Keating from your perspective? I know later when he went to Israel, he was getting quite old and he wasn't as engaged. Or was this when he was in Israel?

KIRBY: No. He went to Israel after India. He was in India from 1969-1972.

Q: We're really talking about a man with an honorable career but who was just getting too old. How did you find him at that time? Was he a personage of some figure taking control or was this pretty much in the hands of professionals?

KIRBY: I was, and am, extremely fond of Ambassador Keating. I had not known him before we went out there. My wife and I got to know him very well in Delhi and traveled with him on one occasion to Kashmir, and on another to South India. We found him to be genial and warm and a very honorable gentleman. I don't think it was so much a question of advanced age—he was 69 when he went to New Delhi, and he stayed there three years, so he must have been close to 72 when he left. I had never previously seen him except in photos and on television when he was in the Senate, so I can't compare the pre-New Delhi person with the man we knew in Delhi. I suspect that his personality was always that of being a rather genial presiding figure, presiding deity, rather than a nuts and bolts policy figure, if you will. And that's the role he played in the Embassy. He was engaged. Ambassador Keating came to the office every day, he held country team meetings, and senior staff meetings, he received visitors, and within the parameters he and the DCM had worked out, he would sign off as authorizing officer on telegrams to Washington which addressed major issues. But the embassy was run essentially by the Deputy Chief of Mission and the Embassy counselors and agency heads. They were a very senior and very powerful group in India, but a very collegial group on the whole. I'm not implying they took anything away from the Ambassador; that appeared to be how he wished to operate. He saw himself as the front man, meeting and greeting visitors, going to see the Prime Minister, and sometimes meeting other senior ministers in the Indian government like the Foreign Minister. If he was not a vigorous “hands-on” type, which he was not, it always struck me that he was always a genial presiding officer, a genial “Chairman of the Board”. It always seemed to me and my wife that it was a pity that Ambassador Keating, if he was to be Ambassador to India, was not there in better days,

that he was not there during a non-war situation when U.S.-Indian relations were good, where he could sort of go with the flow and enjoy the place. He had an immense liking for India, always claiming that he had asked President Nixon, who had earlier lost out on his Senate race to Bobby Kennedy, to send him to India because Keating, a lawyer, had been a mid-fortyish Brigadier General who had served in India in the China-Burma-India theater in World War II. And he had formed a great liking for India at that time. So, he had a genuine liking for India. It was just not in the cards that he and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi would get along well in the then prevailing political circumstances. There was not particularly good chemistry between this particular female Prime Minister and an older American ambassador. I just always wished that he had been there during easier and better days. But, he didn't do a bad job.

Q: Did you find during this crisis and the war that your Indian sources either dried up on you or turned sour?

KIRBY: Dramatically to the contrary. It was extraordinary the extent to which my working and social relationships held up through the war. I'm not saying, “hey, look at me,” but there may be a lesson for all of us in this. Sources didn't dry up; I had worked at cultivating them. I just want to give one or two examples to illustrate this. The first occurred a month or two before the outbreak of direct India-Pakistan conflict. Without going into all the details, some rather dramatic armed incident occurred in East Pakistan which caused the Pakistani Government to argue that common sense suggested that elements of the Indian Army had to have gone across the border into East Pakistan to bring the incident about. It could not have happened any other way, they charged and, indeed, I privately thought that was probably the case. The previous day on instructions from Washington, the Ambassador had been in to discuss that incident with the Indian Foreign Minister. The event had happened three or four days before. The incident occurred, and Embassy Delhi was reasonably certain, and Washington was reasonably certain, that the Indians had brought about whatever that development was. Under instructions, the Ambassador went in to see the Foreign Minister who looked him in the eye and said, “No, we were not

involved...we could not have been involved...for the following reason," etc. I pondered the matter long and hard and put together some pieces of the puzzle that were available to me. I concluded once again, that it couldn't have happened any other way but through Indian involvement. So I picked up the telephone that day after the Ambassador had appropriately done his job, by discussing the matter with the Foreign Minister at some length. And I called somebody in the Foreign Office and asked to see him that afternoon: "I know you're a busy man, but..." And he said, "Yes, do come at about 5:00, although I am busy." I went in late in the day and I sort of sank down in the chair, looked him in the eye, called him by his nickname, and said, "I don't care what your government is saying, I don't care what you tell me here...I know that the following happened in the following way." And then I laid out my speculation while saying, "I know," and it was a wonderful moment. This person looked me in the eye and said, "I am not going to lie to you. You are absolutely right except for two small details." And then he clarified those details. He didn't want to lie. This man was fiercely protective of Indian policy, but he didn't want a fib on our particular personal record. He knew how things were going to go in East Pakistan; he was very much an Indian spokesman, but with a diplomat whom he respected and a friend for whom I believe he had some affection, he didn't want to prevaricate, so he confirmed what I already knew. And, to his credit, by the way, because he deserved it, he later went on to the very highest diplomatic posts that India has to offer. To repeat, he deserved to; he's that kind of man—a good professional. And when the chips were down, people like that knew the limits of what they could tell me. Maybe some would say that he went over the line, although I don't think so. He knew I had the essence of the matter and was reporting it to Washington anyway, and he presumably wanted me to get it just right. His reading of me and our relationship was such that he did not want to prevaricate under these circumstances. In my mind, that was a highly professional judgment on his part. No, sources didn't dry up, i.e., good professional sources. Of course, there were things that people couldn't and wouldn't tell you, but on the other hand, if you'd spent two years laying the groundwork, you'd probably go away from most conversations knowing as much as you needed to to have a reasonably accurate picture.

The other illustrative incident I might recall was perhaps a little more showy and dramatic. Many of the American Embassy staff were not then getting invitations from Indians, but my wife and I were invited to a fairly high, senior Indian official's house during that period for dinner. And I was very surprised because this was someone whom I had found rather contentious at times. I liked to talk with him and engage him. He and I used to bicker over policy, then shake hands and have a drink. But, we'd argue fiercely. Anyway, he invited us to dinner. And I asked my wife, “What's that about?” And she said, “Well, he's inviting us to dinner.” I said, “Yeah, but why right now?” It was either during the war or perhaps the week after the war. We arrived and found that the guests were mostly Indian officials and politicians; we were the only foreigners there. Our host came to the door and quite deliberately, threw one arm around each of us as he led us in and said, in a booming voice that everyone could hear, “I've been worried about you. I wonder how these Indians are treating you during this time of crisis.” This was a very senior Indian official. That was his way of saying: OK, this is a middle grade officer from an embassy which represents a serious power in the world. We may not like U.S. Government policy, but the U.S. is a serious power, and this is an officer who has always dealt with us fairly and told us exactly where his government stood. All the Indians at the dinner then relaxed and we were immediately drawn into a typical spirited, though friendly, discussion. I was very fond of India but decided early on that as an American representative I would not mix friendship with policy. When you disagreed, you said so. And if you disagreed, you fought like hell, openly. Put the agenda right there out on the table. My wife and I took great pains to do that every place we'd been. I think it works every place. We have never pretended something we didn't believe. If we didn't agree with a given Indian policy, we would say so. We always defended American policy. The Indians knew exactly where we stood. And I think this was a dramatic example of how you can get through difficult times. We were circulating all during the crisis and after the crisis was over when the guns were stilled, i.e., when U.S.-India relations went into decline because of an Indian perception that America had tilted toward Pakistan during the conflict.

Q: Why don't we stop at this point and I'll add a few things. We'll basically start immediately before the guns started going off. What we did when the war went on, follow through with the aftermath. I have a couple of questions I'd like to ask. Did you have any connection or revive anything from the Station Chief, the CIA or anything like that? Did they play any role for information gathering and then did the tone from Washington change? We're thinking about the Enterprise and the tilt and all that. And the post-war period. And then something I'd like to take up before we leave India, would be about how you saw on your side, India and nuclear activities. We'll pick that up then. OK?

KIRBY: Very good.

Q: As you mentioned before, the war was about to start. How did it hit the Embassy? Just prior to this were you all kind of knowing it was going to happen? Was it just a matter of time?

KIRBY: I think that those who followed these things closely believed from about April-May of 1971 on, that a clash between India and Pakistan over East Pakistan (Bangladesh) was inevitable. The political counselor and one or two others and I in our private conversations and in the telegrams we sent to Washington said, “In our best judgment, it will happen.” The only question was when. As I said in our earlier conversation, our feeling in Delhi at the Embassy, and it certainly was the feeling of our authorities in Washington and, I think, that of other friendly governments as well, that whether or not we thought a conflict was inevitable, the thrust of our diplomacy should be to do everything we could to try to assist our two friends in the subcontinent to avoid conflict if it were at all possible. There was never any doubt in my mind that war was just about inevitable. The reason I kept using “well-nigh inevitable” is that one can always hope for a miracle. I did not think that miracle would be forthcoming. I was not surprised when war broke out on the third of December, 1971.

Q: Did you sense, through your visits and all, that there was a difference in attitudes between our Consul General in Dhaka (Arch Blood was the Consul General at the time) but on the ground watching the Pakistanis in what was a fairly brutal repression of dissident forces, what the Embassy in Rawalpindi/Islamabad was reporting?

KIRBY: You're asking whether there was any difference between the two? You know, I haven't gone back and looked at telegraphic traffic for that period. And I would have to do that before I could answer that with any real sense of confidence. I don't remember any sharp differences, but of course Dhaka was reporting the firm Pakistani Army crackdown.

Q: It's not really the reporting from the cables. What I'm think about that you were talking to everybody and I guess everybody was talking to everybody else?

KIRBY: As I had mentioned last time, I had myself gone to what was then East Pakistan, in March of 1970 and had had a nice trip there. That was approximately one year before the conflict broke out. After that I was privy to the analysis, the telegraphic reporting the things that all Foreign Service posts in the region were sending to Washington. But I didn't make any trips myself to Dhaka and East Pakistan after March, 1970. My memory of it is—and again I underline memory because I haven't re-read the telegraphic traffic—I don't recall any sharp differences between Dhaka and Rawalpindi. I do recall that our people in Dhaka shared the view that East Pakistani, or Bengali dissidence would continue, and that in the fullness of time it would be difficult for Pakistan, i.e., the government in West Pakistan, to hold onto the East. I think that was their bottom line view. Over in Rawalpindi—but again, to get a firm view of this, you would have to talk to people who were over in the Embassy in Rawalpindi at the time—my memory is that our embassy recognized that it would be a difficult task, but that it was perhaps understandable if a sovereign state like Pakistan tried to hold itself together and hold the constituent parts together. That would have been the embassy's analysis, that the Pakistani Government had the legal right to try to maintain the country's integrity.

Q: It was our obvious policy to try to stop everyone from fighting. What were you tasked with? I mean you at the Embassy, what were you tasked with doing?

KIRBY: As I recall it, the Embassy in New Delhi got fairly steady instructions from Washington, i.e., the State Department and the White House, to weigh in with the Indians, to try to persuade the Indian government not to do anything that might exacerbate the situation, not to cause the situation in the region to deteriorate. And so in that regard, the Ambassador, the Deputy Chief of Mission, operating under those instructions went in very frequently to see the Foreign Minister, and the Foreign Secretary to argue against adventurism if you will. I believe they also saw the Prime Minister during that period. Certainly, at my level, I was doing the same thing. I was seeing what would equate with our Assistant Secretary level and Director level in the Foreign Ministry, making the same points. I also accompanied the Ambassador and the Deputy Chief of Mission on calls on the Foreign Secretary and the Foreign Minister.

Q: What were you getting in response?

KIRBY: What we were getting in response was that it was not at all an Indian affair. They said that India had nothing to do with this. It was purely indigenous, bubbling up spontaneously out of the hearts and desires of the East Bengalis (the people of East Pakistan) Of course, India was doing nothing to affect the situation one way or the other, they said. The Indian government privately offered the observation, as I recall, that they thought that sentiment in East Pakistan was so strong that over time the government in West Pakistan would not be able to prevail and would not be able to keep East Pakistan within an united Pakistan.

Q: You were being told this. What was your feeling as far as Indian influence within East Pakistan?

KIRBY: It was quite clear from the beginning that India was not playing a passive role.

Q: What about the Central Intelligence Agency? This is exactly the sort of time when it's supposed to play a major role, I think. You know you're trying to find out what our intentions are. Was there cooperation? What were you getting out of this source?

KIRBY: I frankly don't know what the ground rules are for responding to or commenting on a question like that even in this kind of interview. I'm struck by the fact in successive U.S. Administrations extending pretty much over my professional lifetime, when the government spokesman is asked this kind of question, his response is always, “We don't comment on these matters.”

Q: We're out of the business and it is unclassified. We're not trying to expose sources but at the same time, I think it's perfectly fair to make a judgment about this as an instrument.

KIRBY: Sure. I think maybe the question is particularly relevant in this case. You indicated at one stage that you want to go on later and touch briefly on the “U.S. Enterprise” in the Bay of Bengal. I am reasonably certain that Henry Kissinger wrote in his memoirs that one of the reasons for the “Enterprise” episode was that we felt we had to make a gesture to warn the Indians about our concern that they were prepared, not only to see an independent Bangladesh emerge from the war, but perhaps also to attack West Pakistan frontally in an effort to break up Pakistan. And he says, either in his memoirs or elsewhere, that it was in information gathered by the CIA that triggered our concern. I want to come back to the matter of the war in the west in a minute because I think U.S. perceptions of what might happen in that sector were critical to how the U.S. addressed the overall war. But my point here is that since the former Secretary of State introduced this whole question of intelligence reports in public examination of U.S. policy toward the war, maybe your question is in fact relevant to our discussion. I don't have...my memory of it is...and I'm notably not “goody-goody”, I believe in being precise in my judgments. My memory of the war and of the events preceding it is that all elements of the Embassy in New Delhi where I was serving along with the constituent posts at the Consulates General in India, were working in pretty close harmony. There was a very good meshing of all elements of

the mission and a very good exchange of information. There was good debate on points where we were uncertain. It was a cooperative and rather seamless undertaking among the various elements of the mission. My own feeling, all during my time in India, and perhaps this arose because I had dedicated so much time to the subcontinent, my own feeling was that there was a lot out in the open there for any diplomatic establishment to find if you just dug and looked for it. If you actively looked around, sniffed the air, talked to people, and put the pieces together that you could get the story or the major elements of what was going on without recourse to unusual means of obtaining information, if you follow me. So, as a South Asian hand, I felt, if I may say so, that I pretty much knew what was going on. We talked earlier in these sessions about what an Embassy officer does, what his daily fare is like. I found that by using our normal resources, our normal contacts, we were able to follow the story, including its all-important policy aspects, pretty well. But having said that, I will go back and repeat that it was a very competent mission, very well staffed, at every level, and I think it meshed unusually well.

Q: In your contacts with the military attach#s and all, did you feel that the Indian military had almost its own agenda as regards what was happening there as opposed to the politicians? I mean, I won't say a great discrepancy, but the military really wanted...this was a chance to have at the Pakistanis, whereas the government may have had a different aim. How did you see that?

KIRBY: The short answer is no. I did not feel that the Indian military in its corporate self had a separate agenda, one separate from the politicians. Incidentally, I assume that is still the case today, although I'm not familiar with the Indian army today—I haven't followed it in recent years. During the period we're talking about, however, the Indian army always struck me as being a very professional organization which was professionally well led. It was an army that had a pretty sophisticated view of the Indian constitution and was willing to stick by it. While I don't have any specific memory of such a case, I suppose you could have found individual military officers, just like you find individual politicians in any country at any time, who perhaps are a little bit out of the main stream of their government's policy

line and want to go for the jugular, or want to go for broke toward a “final solution” of one kind or another. But, the leadership of the Indian military appeared faithfully to carry out government policy. I didn't get a sense of a separate military agenda. I remember talking with General Manekshaw, who was the Indian Chief of Staff in 1970 and 1971. I used to see him informally occasionally. I don't remember if the war clouds were actually gathering at the time of the particular conversation that now I refer to although relations with Pakistan were tense all during my time in India. General Manekshaw said, “Look, I've always said to my senior officers, 'We're soldiers. We have certain skills that we are very proud of. As long as we stick to our assigned tasks, we will continue to do well and to merit the nation's applause. But if we somehow step out of our role and get involved in politics, and try to do some of the things our neighbor's army is doing, we'd make a hash of running the government just as they have.'” So, his line was that India's civilian leadership ran the government and should make the final decisions on war and peace. As I say, there may possibly have been individual officers who were more militant than the leadership, but overall I found a responsible group which was willing to do whatever the civilian leadership decided to do. I would suppose, however, that the Chief of Staff and other military people must have given advice to the politicians in the councils on war and peace.

Q: Well, how did this play out? The war clouds are gathering. The Pakistanis sent their army in. How did they send in their army? Did they have to go over Indian territory or how did they work?

KIRBY: They had a sizeable force there in East Pakistan already. Supply, re-supply and re-positioning was a terrible problem for them because East Pakistan was far away from the West Pakistani heartland. Looking at the map, it's a long distance between the old West Pakistan and the Eastern wing. I don't recall with total clarity how the re-supply problem was resolved in normal times, in peacetime, Pakistan had fairly automatic over-flights over India. They had to notify the Indian authorities any time they were overflying India, but it was a fairly automatically granted right. I remember that as the pre-war crisis deepened, there was discussion in the Indian government about whether they should

withdraw near-automatic overflight rights. I don't remember how that worked out in the pre-war period. I do remember that Pakistan had a major problem because, among other things, it didn't have available all the air transport necessary to do all the re-provisioning they would have liked to do. Then, too, there were divided councils in the Pakistan Government about how heavily they should crack down in the East.

Q: How did the actual war come about? As seen by the Embassy.

KIRBY: As the subcontinent slipped toward war in the summer and fall, an eventual war appeared inevitable, as I commented earlier. You might recall the visit to India and Pakistan in July 1971 of Henry Kissinger, who was then National Security Advisor to the President. He came to both countries. We didn't know it at the time although we learned it during his trip, this itinerary was part of his first trip to China. But first he stopped off in India for a day, maybe a day and a half, and then went on to Pakistan for a similar period. Like other levels of U.S. officialdom throughout the subcontinent's crisis, Kissinger went to India and Pakistan to argue for a stand-down and peace on the subcontinent. I remember our internal talks in the Embassy conference room in New Delhi, where I was asked to make a presentation. I remember very vividly saying, “Mr. Kissinger, unless a miracle occurs there will be a war in the subcontinent by the end of 1971 and I for one, do not foresee that miracle.” That is very vivid in my mind. And then, all through the autumn you could see the two countries edging toward war. Without going into great detail, I remember the step up in propaganda on both sides, the re-positioning of troops, the flow of refugees from East Pakistan into Eastern India which put further pressures on India, and then some evidence of skirmishing on or near the eastern border. Then in November there was an incident in East Pakistan which involved the Indians. The Indian Prime Minister went before Parliament and said that the Indian military was not involved, but it was clear that they were because that event could not have happened in that way if they weren't directly involved. I think an Indian plane was shot down, but I have forgotten the precise details. So you could see India and Pakistan steadily moving toward war. Mrs. Gandhi, in October, had taken her so-called “last trip for peace” where she went to Bonn, London and

Washington to plead India's case. Back in August, the Indians had shocked the West—although it wasn't too great a surprise—by concluding a new agreement with the Soviet Union for aid and support. So all of these factors were clearly moving the region toward war. In the end, Pakistan decided to attack. They did, on the evening of December 3, 1971 by trying to take out India's air defense system in west and north-central India. It was a fairly halfhearted effort to take out some of the air potential of the Indians in Western India. They bombed some Indian air bases and a couple of big radar centers. That's the way the war began. One can still speculate on what the Pakistanis, by attacking, thought they were going to get out of all this. My view at the time, and my view today is that since it was so clear by December 1971, that East Pakistan could not be held, the Pakistani leadership decided to make a gesture in the West to try to save national honor, but not with a serious intent of wanting to provoke a major and problematical conflict with India in the West, if it could be avoided.

Q: Was there any change in how the Embassy operated? Because I take it war was declared.

KIRBY: Whether there was an actual declaration or not, I do not recall, it was certainly a war, even if only a brief one. War came. The Pakistanis attacked and Mrs. Gandhi spoke to the nation on the radio about midnight, saying, in effect, that the war was on. She then made a formal statement in Parliament the next day, a very important statement which alleged that war had been thrust on India, and said that India would protect itself. The statement indicated, as I recall, that a free and independent entity would emerge from East Pakistan, but then, very importantly, asked that, “We (India) seek no wider war.”

Q: The war started by a Pakistani attack although much led up to this. What did we do then, after this?

KIRBY: When you're in a war-time situation, an Embassy does a lot of things simultaneously. The consular section was busy looking after the American community in

India—e.g., sending out warden notices, telling people to stand in place or take shelter because we didn't know how extensive the war way going to be. That's on one side of the embassy's business. All of us in the political section were trying to analyze what was going on and reporting developments to Washington. Once war came, the critical question we focused on was not whether Pakistan could hold East Pakistan, because it was clear they could not, but, rather, whether India would use the Pakistani attack as an excuse to make major war on Pakistan in the West. The central question was whether India would use the Pakistani attack as an excuse to try to scatter Pakistan to the four winds. Once war came, the central thrust of American diplomacy and that of the rest of the world was to try to prevent that from happening—to keep India from using the war as an excuse to break up West Pakistan. It was Indian intent on this matter we were looking and listening for. When Mrs. Gandhi spoke to the nation around midnight, we were all seeking some hint as to what India intended to do in the West. My memory of it is that we didn't get anything on that in the radio broadcast that night, however. Obviously we were scrambling around seeing every Indian official we could to pose the question: “How's India going to respond in the West?” The next big public opportunity to get some clue on that was when the Prime Minister was scheduled to speak in the Lower House of the Parliament at about noon on Saturday. The war broke out on Friday, the third of December and she was to speak, it was announced, on Saturday morning to give a policy statement. I was in the diplomatic gallery, filled to overflowing as you would expect, when the Prime Minister spoke at noon on Saturday. She said that Bangladesh would be free and made the case that it was an indigenous struggle. She insisted that Bangladesh would be free—there was to be no doubt of that. The key phrase, however, was, “We seek no wider war”, I reported to my Embassy, and we reported to Washington, that assuming that the Prime Minister was sincere—and we said we thought that it might well be for a variety of reasons—then India would be prepared (we thought) to undertake a holding action in the West to see what Pakistan did in that sector. If Pakistan were so incautious as to engage the main Indian forces in the West then that would be a different story, and a major war would ensue. We in the Embassy thought that, “We seek no wider war” should be taken very seriously and

that we should push the Indians to live up to it. That same Saturday afternoon the Indian Foreign Secretary, T.K. Kaul held a number of meetings with the Ambassadors of the major powers. When he met with our Ambassador that afternoon, Kaul drew particular attention to Mrs. Gandhi's statement, “We seek no wider war”. The American Ambassador who had not always received 100% truthful information from his Indian interlocutors that year, if one can be fair about it, pressed and said, “Do you mean it?” The answer was, “Yes, we do, it depends upon what the Pakistanis do.” So we were urging from New Delhi to Washington and to our Embassy in Rawalpindi that the Pakistanis should be persuaded not to give the Indians an excuse to enlarge the war. We didn't think the Indians saw it in their interest to try to break up Pakistan. I never believed, then or now, that Mrs. Gandhi thought it in India's interest to break up Pakistan. I never thought that predominant Indian opinion favored breaking up Pakistan, although there were times when Mrs. Gandhi and other Indians were so irritated with Pakistan they might well have had emotional tugs in the opposite direction. But I didn't feel in 1971 that India saw it as truly in its interest to try to break up Pakistan. Thus things developed about the way I expected them to on that front. There were some skirmishes with Pakistan in the West, and in Jammu and Kashmir. In the end, the Pakistanis, interestingly enough, once “honor was served” (my phrase, not theirs) did not commit to battle their newest military equipment or their most elite troops. In effect, they didn't engage the Indians seriously in the West, and the Indians didn't try to go in and open up the war further. But, during those two weeks of the formal war, the thrust of our diplomacy was to try to ensure that there would be “no wider war”.

Q: Did you have any feeling in New Delhi, the White House—Nixon, Kissinger, were coming down a little heavy on the Pakistani side, or were you pretty much left to do your traditional role of both trying to get everybody to come to the peace agreement?

KIRBY: I'd have to go back and read all the documents of the period to be able to give you a full answer to that, which I haven't done. I think we were in Delhi largely allowed to get on with our task. Certainly the White House had been irritated with what it believed to have been India's facilitative role in the Bangladesh imbroglio all through the summer and fall.

But, there was not a daily hammering from Washington. When war came, our instructions were to try to persuade the Indian Government not to make it a “wider war,” as I said earlier. Kissinger himself writes of Washington's “tilt” toward Pakistan. I think that refers largely to the gesture—and it wasn't more than a gesture—of sending the “Enterprise” into the Bay of Bengal.

Q: This was a one-carrier task force?

KIRBY: Yes. This was not a serious gesture, but it damaged our future relations with India.

Q: It was just enough to annoy and not enough to be effective, was it?

KIRBY: I think that's accurate, yes. And it was addressed at something that wasn't happening, the “wider war” in the West. It was a warning to India not to break up West Pakistan after the Indian leadership had already declared themselves publicly against a “wider war.” By extrapolating from what Mr. Kissinger and others have said, it would appear that in the “Enterprise” episode, the audiences for that gesture were China, in the first instance, and the Soviet Union, in the second.

Q: India had just signed an agreement with the Soviet Union which was more military materials and all that. What was the role of the Soviet Union or Soviet Embassy during this war?

KIRBY: Nobody quite knew from the rather anodyne language of the friendship treaty with the Soviet Union of August, 1971, what its actual contact might be. Nobody quite knew what the full dimensions of the agreement were, exactly what it committed the Soviet to. The assumption was that it certainly committed them to providing military equipment (no doubt about that) and various types of unspecified diplomatic support, we supposed. Whether if the Indians had gotten into a tight corner with the Pakistanis—which, in my view, could not have happened given the preponderance of forces on the Indian side —in the very unlikely event that China would have intervened directly in the conflict—

whether that might have brought the Soviets more actively into play no one knows. That was always a question hanging in the air. Perhaps one of the reasons the Indians signed the agreement was to deter others from entering the fray. What did the Soviets do?
Not very much that I recall. The Soviet Embassy was very, very large at that time, very elephantine in its work patterns and so on. They got “around town” but not very effectively or not very imaginatively. While they were at least visible on the Delhi scene, the Soviet Embassy and its personnel were not much of a factor in this short war. If the war had gone on longer, maybe that would have changed. As I said, it was about a two-week war. The fighting lasted for a week or ten days, and then it was over. And so the Indians really didn't have to call in all of their diplomatic chips. But the signing of that agreement with the Soviets in August—going back to something you asked earlier—was another of the irritants to the West. It was another irritant which further persuaded the White House that the Indians were friendlier to the Soviets than they were to the West and that they were up to something they shouldn't be.

Q: When the war petered out, did we have any role in the final terms, the refugees, any of the other fall-out consequences?

KIRBY: Well, we'd had a lot to do with the refugees all during that year as they were pouring into India in the spring, summer and fall. We had our AID people working on food and other refugee assistance, we assisted UNDP, Senator Kennedy, in his capacity as chairman of the Senate's Subcommittee on Refugees, came to India to see how the U.S. could best focus its refugee assistance.

Q: You were saying you were providing food to the refugees?

KIRBY: Yes. Food and various kinds of assistance to the refugees. The U.S. put in a lot of support at that time. In the aftermath of the war in late 1971 and through most of 1972 The U.S. tried to work with India and Pakistan to ameliorate the effects of the war. The U.S., and others too, tried to be helpful to New Delhi and Rawalpindi as we advanced thoughts

for peaceful accommodation that the two sides later tried to put the Simla Accord to serve as a framework for their relations. We offered ideas on how they could relax tensions. One subject was repatriation of prisoners of war, so that all the prisoners of war in Bangladesh could be repatriated to Pakistan, and so on. We played an active diplomatic role in trying to bring the two sides together on such practical matters.

Q: Did you find any change in attitudes in connections in dealing with the Indian government after the war as opposed to before the war?

KIRBY: Certainly, bilateral relations went into a deep freeze by mid-1972. Indian-U.S. relations suffered all through 1971 as war was pending and then given the Indian perception of Washington's tilt towards Pakistan, yes, bilateral relations began to be cut back in several spheres, affecting many programs and policies. My wife and I didn't notice any great change in our own contacts with Indians, however. We had been in India a long time. We knew a lot of Indians, both official and non-official, whom we knew on a friendly and personal basis as I said in an earlier segment of this interview. They always knew that we represented the United States. We were always very, very clear about that. We were very, very direct in speaking out to them when we saw things that we didn't agree with in Indian policy. But, no, relations were friendly right up until we left in September, 1972—the personal relations were still just terrific. People continued to have us to their house for dinner. The son of a very senior diplomat—the son himself was a distinguished diplomat and became India's Foreign Secretary in later years—and his wife did the generous, hospitable, traditional Indian thing the day we left of spending our last hours in Delhi with us at our house. They weren't the only ones. There were others there, too, staying with us until it was time to go to the airport. This was their way of showing that these ties of friendship were sacred and had not been touched by any of this.

Q: What was your impression of the Indian government after the creation of Bangladesh? Was it a stronger basis, I mean, did this change things at all?

KIRBY: Mrs. Gandhi's government stayed pretty much what it had been, although it was somewhat, if only temporarily, strengthened by the experience. Coming through the war with Pakistan successfully (from the Indian point of view), and helping with the emergence of Bangladesh, Mrs. Gandhi was perceived in India as being the victor, as being a successful leader. While that image would fade somewhat later, for the immediate 1972-1973 period the successful war strengthened her hand in intra-mural Indian politics. As I mentioned in earlier segments, prior to the 1971 crisis she had been hard pressed by the conservative old-timers in her party. Some called them the “old guard”, some called them the “barons...the king makers” in the Indian National Congress Party. They had presented a real challenge to her in 1969-1970 as they sought to get her out of power. As I say, the events of late 1971 strengthened her hand within the Indian National Congress Party and within the country for the short term. A couple of years later, she would face a different kind of political challenge, and a major one. But for that period just after the war, I think that she was more self-confident, as were the people around her.

Q: What was the impression at the Embassy of the future of Bangladesh? Was that going to change the equation in the area or not?

KIRBY: I don't think that we thought it was going to change the power equation in any significant way. In fact there were many among us who argued that if Pakistan could get over its chagrin, swallow its pride, move forward from the loss of East Pakistan, a slenderized West Pakistan could be a more coherent purposeful country than it had been able to be while trying to manage different culture and people, the East Bengalis, who lay several hundred miles away. We thought that during its early years, a newly independent Bangladesh, by definition, would require a lot of diplomatic, economic, and financial support to get going in the world. We thought it would particularly need India's strong support. We also thought that the time would come, sooner than the Indians believed, when they and Bangladesh would begin quarreling over the apportionment of eastern waters, and other such noisome matters.

Q: Well, you left there in the fall of 1972. Where did you go?

KIRBY: Washington. At the very end of 1972.

Q: To do what?

KIRBY: During calendar year 1973, I was assigned to the interagency group which was conducting the Micronesian Status Negotiations in the western Pacific. We had two separate negotiations going simultaneously. One with the Mariana Islands—Saipan, Tinian, and that group of islands. The second set was with the rest of Micronesia, i.e., the Marshall Islands and the Carolines. During that year of 1973 when I was involved, we successfully concluded the negations with the Marianas. We signed an agreement in December, 1973, which was approved by the White House and the Congress, I think the following year. That brought the Marianas into the American political family as a Commonwealth, which is of course, the status they have today. So those negotiations, tricky and difficult at times, went very well in that they produced a successful result. The other negotiations were more difficult because there were more island groups involved and the islands themselves were not of one mind regarding what future status they wanted. For the rest of Micronesia, those questions would not be decided until well into the 1980's. But it was a fascinating experience. Some of the negotiating was done here in Washington, and all the preparations were done here, of course. We spent long weeks negotiating, sometimes in Honolulu but most often in Saipan, the capital of the Marianas. And we spent a fair amount of time in Guam as well. It was a fascinating time, a new experience for me, but a very interesting and useful one.

Q: Who was negotiating on the other side?

KIRBY: I'll tell you who was negotiating on the other side and then I'll tell you who was on our side, if you're interested in that, too. Originally, there had been just one negotiation. After World War II the U.S. administered Micronesia under a UN trusteeship. The area

administered was known as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. Originally, when the negotiations started in the 1970's there was one Micronesian team negotiating with the United States. Then the Mariana Islands decided to break off and negotiate their own deal. The Marianas had a legislature under the trusteeship arrangement. And the legislature appointed a negotiating team. I think there may have been popular elections to choose some members of the negotiating team, as well. Most of their team came from the Mariana legislature, which was the legislature of the Northern Marianas. The leader in the legislature, Eddie Pangassiman, was their chief negotiator. They did a very good job. They were assisted throughout the negotiations by some pretty impressive legal talent from well-known Washington law firms, which they retained to help them in the negotiations. On the U.S. Government side, the negotiating team was headed by Hayden Williams, President of the Asia Foundation in San Francisco. He had Ambassadorial rank as the President's Personal Representative for the negotiations. He was aided by a team that had as permanent party, two officers from the State Department, some people from Interior, representatives from the Joint Chiefs of Staff also from DOD/ISA. During part of my time there, the senior man from the Joint Chiefs was then naval Captain Bill Crowe, who later became Admiral Crowe and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Q: Did our military have certain things that we just had to have? I mean what was our policy?

KIRBY: Strategic and security considerations tended to drive the negotiations. There was also a feeling of obligation to the islanders to be sure, but security concerns were very important in the negotiations. The U.S. wanted three things: denial of the Marianas to any outside power...in a military sense; U.S. control of defense and foreign policy, and U.S. military access to the islands should the need arise. I don't know that the U.S. will ever use it, but we negotiated at that time access to a large piece of land for an air facility should we ever need it. I don't think that to date we've ever done anything about exercising that option, which we negotiated over twenty years ago.

Q: After this time, where to? This was the beginning of 1974?

KIRBY: Yes. I worked on the Micronesian negotiations in 1973. From the beginning of January 1974 till the middle of 1976, I was Officer-in-Charge of Turkish Affairs in the State Department. When I was recruited for that job, Greece, Turkey and Cyprus were still operating out of the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs, as they always had. Sometime around April of 1974, those offices got caught up in then Secretary of State Kissinger's decision to rearrange the State Department's world administratively. And Greece, Turkey and Cyprus were brought over into the European Bureau in April, 1974.

Q: A very interesting thing. It came just at the wrong time.

KIRBY: As then Assistant Secretary for European Affairs and good friend Art Hartman told me and my counterpart on Greece, John Day, with a rueful chuckle, the change came at a very bad time for the European Bureau. Greece and Turkey were feuding seriously over Aegean Sea issues in the spring of 1974, and the European Bureau had had little experience dealing with these antagonists except in a benign way in a multi-lateral NATO setting. The world had seen the two Cyprus crises of 1964 and 1967, which seemed to bring Greece and Turkey to the brink of war; the Department's Near Eastern Bureau had handled those crises as usual. But suddenly, in April of 1974, just as tensions were obviously building visibly between Greece and Turkey, suddenly the European Bureau inherited the Greeks and Turks. But from the standpoint of those of us who had come over to EUR from NEA to do the work, it was, in a way, not only a great challenge, but also a professional God-send, because the European Bureau very nicely relied on us to such an extent that we had a much bigger piece of the action as Officers-in-Charge and greater access to the top people in the Department and the White House during the crisis that unfolded during 1974 than might have been the case had the action still been NEA. (In NEA, of course, we would have been in the thick of the bureaucratic action, as well.) I think

we acquitted ourselves well. Assistant Secretary Hartman and others said we did, so we were very satisfied to be involved.

Q: You took over in January of 1974. What was the situation in Turkey at that time?

KIRBY: In terms of domestic politics, things were pretty stable in Turkey at that time. The wave of leftist terrorism that had rocked the country and the establishment in the early 1970's was at an end, and the RPD government (Social Democratic) was able to govern.

Q: Was Cyprus much of an issue at the time?

KIRBY: In early 1974 the long-festering Cyprus problem didn't seem to hold clear and present danger of bursting into something more virulent, as it did later in the spring. Greeks and Turks had been rumbling about Cyprus from time to time, as they always did. The tensions between Makarios in Cyprus on the one hand, and the Greek colonel leadership on the other, held the seeds of potential further trouble, which would arouse the Turks' interest.

Q: Actually there were Greek Generals who had taken over from the Colonels. Papadopoulos was out. Ioannidis came in about Thanksgiving of 1973.

KIRBY: Yes. There were clear strains as I recall, between some elements of the Greek leadership and Makarios in Cyprus which the Turks were watching attentively. I don't think the Turks in early 1974 were trying to move the Cyprus problem in any particular direction. They saw it as a festering thing and were concerned about it. As I was reading into my duties in early 1974, Cyprus was always on the screen as one of the noisome issues between Greece and Turkey, but the Cyprus problem did not appear unusually ominous. As we got into the Spring of 1974, it was Aegean Sea issues that seemed to present clear and present danger for conflict between Greece and Turkey. That Spring, in April and May, there was a lot of angry jabbering between Athens and Ankara about overflight rights and mineral exploration rights. The friction seemed artificial but ominous.

Q: It wasn't good, as I recall. I was in Athens. I had never realized how you could push that Turkish button. It would get the Greek people stirred up, normally peaceful people.

KIRBY: And the Ioannidis government of the generals in Athens was still busy establishing their influence and authority. They began testing the limits of Turkish patience in the Aegean, and the Turks were responding. There was an unreal aspect to all of this at the time, as each side sought to one-up the other. Worrisome things were happening. The ships of each side began to challenge the other because of the movements of a hydro-exploration vessel. One air force began testing the limits of air space around closely spaced islands, while the other air force began closing off air space, and so on. So the spring was a very worrisome time.

Q: But on the desk, you get these things between allies. What would the desk officer do, say on the Turkish side, when the Turks were trying to put oceanographic vessels out into the Aegean?

KIRBY: Well, we were in regular contact with Turkish Ambassador Melhi Essenbel and his embassy team here. We saw them on almost a daily basis and we were at pains every time there was an incident to enjoin them to send the word back to Ankara not to over-react. That was very much a part of our diplomatic posture at the time. More importantly, I was grinding out instructions to Ambassador Macomber in Ankara instructing him to go in and meet with Prime Minister Ecevit, the Foreign Minister, and the military to try to make sure the Turks didn't over-react to what they saw as provocations from the other side, and also to argue that, on their side, the Turks themselves should not undertake any provocative actions. So we had quite a dialogue between Washington and Ankara, with major high-level intercessions in Ankara, we had an almost daily dialogue with the Turks at the time. As I said, we told them not to be provocative themselves, and not to be overly sensitive to what they considered provocation from the Greek side. We argued these were pin-pricks and thus not all that important. We were aware, of course, that where Greek and

Turkish national pride were involved, even the smallest acts often, unfortunately, took on high symbolic significance.

Q: What were your relations with the Greek desk?

KIRBY: They were very good. My counterpart, the Officer-in-Charge of Greece, John Day, was very experienced. John had served in Greece a couple of times and knew Greece very well; he also had a good feel for Cyprus and Turkey. If I may say so, apart from being thoroughly professional, John's personality was just perfect for this work. He was quiet, low-key, and amiable—the perfect colleague to work with. And so we were able to cooperate productively throughout the crisis. There was never any doubt in our minds that we were both working for the U.S. government and should collaborate toward a common end. On a daily basis, sometimes many times a day, we were in each other's office making sure we had a common perspective on what was going on. I think it's fair to say, that once the European Bureau inherited Greece, Turkey and Cyprus, we felt a strong responsibility to make sure that our new Bureau, which hadn't worked Greek-Turkish problems day in and day out over many years the way the Near Eastern Bureau had, had available our best judgment and best analysis and recommendations for policy. So that brought John and me together in a very cooperative way.

Q: It must have. Just looking at it bureaucratically and to take essentially one major problem, NEA had always had the India-Pakistan problem, always had the Arab-Israeli problem, always the Greek-Turkish problem. In other words, the NEA Bureau was the crisis bureau. From one end to the other there was always something significant happening. Whereas the European Bureau in a way—where the fate of civilization lay, what was going to happen between East and West—was essentially static. Things might flare up in Hungary or Czechoslovakia or Poland. In the first place, how were you received? I would have thought there would be some thought that quarreling children were coming in to sit at the big person's table or something like that. I would have thought.

KIRBY: We were received very well by EUR, I thought. Somewhat quizzically and whimsically, as Greece and Turkey edged toward a conflict over Cyprus, Assistant Secretary Hartman, with a nice smile and certainly not meaning it, asked, rhetorically, “What in the world did we do to deserve you people?” I replied, “Who us, or our Greek and Turkish clients?” We were very well received in the European Bureau. Again, I'm not a goody-goody. I must note though that I thought that the European Bureau had absolutely first-class management at that time, as it usually has had. At that time, there was Assistant Secretary Hartman, his chief deputy, Wells Stabler, and a number of other Deputy Assistant Secretaries; they were a top-flight group. I think John Day and I, and Tom Boyatt as Cyprus Desk Officer (although he departed after a few weeks or months for other duties) were flattered and gratified to have the EUR leadership tell us: “We haven't dealt with the areas you cover except in the NATO context, so we're going to rely on you, and we're going to give you a large margin of maneuver.” And they did. Although I would have preferred not to have gone through the Cyprus events of 1974, I must say that bureaucratically and professionally it was stimulating and rewarding. It was very hard work from 1974-1976. However, working with the Hartman-Stabler team and, as we got into the Cyprus crisis, working directly with Secretary Kissinger and, indeed, with the White House, was really a grand experience. They used the Greek, Turkish, and Cyprus Officers-in-Charge as if we had been part of their team for a very long time. We spent a lot of time working directly with the 6th and 7th floor principals.

Q: Did Cyprus move over with you all?

KIRBY: Yes.

Q: Can you talk about how from your perspective and the historical perspective what happened, how did the Cyprus thing...I mean what precipitated it? We're talking about this tension between Greece and Turkey in 1974.

KIRBY: Obviously the Turks woke up to what had been going on in Cyprus somewhat belatedly. Ioannidis and the Greek Generals regime had infiltrated major elements of the Greek Army into Cyprus so you had a very large Greek military force there, contrary to prevailing international agreements on Cyprus. When the Greek army then moved against Makarios, the Turkish belief was that it was an out and out power grab on Cyprus by the Greek Generals. This was July of 1974, either the 14th or the 15th.

Q: What were you getting out of Athens prior to this? Or the CIA as far as what was happening?

KIRBY: Again, my memory is not as fresh as it could be on all this. I haven't gone back and reviewed the documents of the period. In any case, it was pretty clear that things were deteriorating in the region. We talked earlier about the Greek-Turkish skirmishing in the Aegean in the spring. Then, as we got into the summer of 1974, Cyprus was becoming an issue again. I don't remember clearly exactly when it began to appear that Cyprus could be the flash point for war, but I would say that along in June we began to be very concerned about various things that diplomatic and intelligence and other elements had been picking up. We did not know exactly what Greek intentions were, but we were beginning to know pretty well what they had done by way of infiltrating into Cyprus people in uniform and so on. The Turks were beginning to pick this up and they began to make real noises about what they would accept and wouldn't accept on Cyprus. So, it seems to me it was late June, but it might have been early July, that we were sufficiently alarmed by this that the Sisco Mission was launched. Joe Sisco, then Under Secretary for Political Affairs, had earlier had quite a lot of experience in previous Cyprus crises in the 1960's when he worked on UN affairs and also in the Near Eastern Bureau. Mr. Sisco took out a mission that, as I recall, first went to London. I guess he also went to Athens, and I know he then went to Ankara. The idea was to start out by consulting the British, who were the previous colonial power in Cyprus but were also one of the guarantor powers of Cyprus, just as Greece and Turkey were under the international agreement which established an

independent Cyprus. Sisco first went to London to see if anything could be done to get the Greeks to walk back some of what they had already done. I think he then went to Greece. I know he went to Turkey and had a long conversation with Prime Minister Ecevit. It was already pretty clear by the time Sisco left Washington, I thought, and certainly by the time of his conversation with Ecevit that the die was cast, and that armed conflict was likely.

Q: This is before Makarios was overthrown? The first Turkish intervention, or not?

KIRBY: I'm trying to remember that.

Q: I think Makarios was overthrown in July.

KIRBY: I think that's right and, that the Sisco Mission came after he was overthrown but before the Turks intervened in mid-July. They intervened twice, the 14th or 15th of July, and then again along in early August to straighten out the line they then held militarily. I think Makarios had been overthrown and we went out to the region to try to prevent war. The Turks were arguing that they wouldn't intervene in Cyprus if the Greeks “walked the cat back” and restored the status quo ante. We were trying to see whether the three guarantor powers could do something to restore the status quo. But the Greeks were looking the other way, saying, in effect, that they didn't have much to do with Cyprus developments and that, in any case, there was nothing much to restore. And we went out to see if there was a way of getting the Greeks to move back, but particularly to persuade the Turks not to intervene militarily despite the coup against Makarios. I think Makarios had fled by that time. Ecevit made it clear to Sisco that unless there were movement, which he didn't foresee, Turkey would have to intervene.

Q: As I recall, there were stories about the Sisco mission—one of these going first to Athens then to Ankara and sort of sitting on the runway and figuring where do we go from here because the Turks had made their mind up that they were going to go in and whatever we had sort of ran out of steam.

KIRBY: Well, yes, it did. When Sisco came out of his second meeting with Ecevit he had concluded, as we had also concluded here in Washington, that our initiative had run its course. Ecevit had said, “Well, I've made it clear that we Turks will intervene unless the status quo is restored. What I'm hearing is that the other side won't restore it, so I'm left with no choice.” And the Turks intervened militarily within a day or two thereafter.

Q: What were you all doing just prior to the intervention and afterwards on the desk and here in Washington?

KIRBY: The usual range of analyses, sending them forward to the 6th and 7th floor of the State Department and on to the White House. Noting the odds on war and peace and what we thought was going to happen. We continued to make recommendations as to what the U.S. should be doing, despite the long odds to try to prevent an armed intervention. We were concerned about a lot of things. The overriding concern was that two NATO allies might stumble into direct bilateral war and that the southeastern flank of NATO would then crumble. Thus, as serious as we saw the Cyprus problem, and while we might understand intellectually why the Turks felt that history and Turkish honor compelled them to intervene since the other side had done something that was pretty egregious all things considered (and was seen to be egregious by all the actors other than themselves), nonetheless the thrust of our diplomacy and the papers we were ginning up here was to try, even though we knew it was a very slender hope, to try to keep the Turks from intervening on Cyprus because we knew it would be messy, we knew that people might die, and we were worried about the long run international political consequences of such an act. But overwhelmingly we were concerned that it could lead, depending upon what the Greeks did in response to a Turkish intervention, to a direct Greek-Turkish war. Thus, against all the odds, we were encouraging the Turks not to intervene, telling them it could lead to broader war and would be very detrimental to their interests. We noted that intervention might encourage the Soviets to act more aggressively both in the region and on a whole range of Cold War

issues. We kept telling both capitals about their NATO responsibilities as we saw it, but it was a scramble because it was pretty clear that the Turks were going to intervene.

Q: After the intervention, as a Turkish desk officer were you getting any reflections of the Greek lobby which was turning into a very powerful lobby at the time?

KIRBY: When the guns stilled, and on into the fall of 1974 and through 1975 and 1976, and right on through the 1970's, we would all hear a lot from the Greek lobby and they would be a continuing part of our professional life as the U.S. Congress, in response to that lobby, decided to terminate U.S. arms assistance to Turkey, and successive U.S. administrations then worked very hard to try to persuade the Congress to change its mind and renew assistance to Turkey. The lobby would be a very real thing for us over a prolonged period. I don't know, however, that while the intervention was occurring that summer that the lobby was much of a factor. Things were moving too quickly for the lobby to mobilize purposefully. We were, to be sure, hearing from people who supported Greece in the press and elsewhere, hearing loud screams from them: Don't let the Turks get away with it," etc. I think all of that was simply background noise during that summer period, but it began to have real policy implications later in the year.

Q: During the intervention, did you get involved in things such as in a previous interview I did recently, I can't remember with whom, talking about the Turks kept telling us make the Greeks turn back some destroyers which they claimed were on their way, or if they passed a certain line we'll sink them. Do you recall that?

KIRBY: I don't recall the details specifically. It awakens an echo but I don't recall the specific details. I do remember that both the Greeks and Turks argued to us that we should use our U.S. assets in the Mediterranean (the 6th Fleet) to turn the "other guy" back. We got that from both sides.

Q: The destroyer thing was interesting because as I was told, actually the Turks kept saying there were some Greek destroyers on their way to Cyprus and if they don't turn

back we'll sink them. And we were running back to the Greeks who were saying we're not sending any destroyers.

KIRBY: I think there was a lot of that back and forth but I don't know exactly where truth lay regarding sending out the ships.

Q: Well, actually what happened is, it turned out the Turks had screwed up and they were Turkish destroyers and they sank their own destroyers.

KIRBY: Oh, yes, that does come back to mind now. I think I do remember the Turks shooting one or two of their own ships. It was at night, I guess on the radar screen they all looked alike since both sides had the same kind of destroyers (Fletcher Class). The Turks did make a misjudgment about whose naval assets were in a given place.

Q: During this crisis did the Pentagon get involved asking what was happening?

KIRBY: They were very much involved. We, the State Department, worked very closely with the Pentagon on Greece, Turkey, Cyprus issues in good times and bad. As Officer-in-Charge of Turkey, I was frequently in meetings with representatives of the Joint Chiefs and ISA (International Security Agency) because of the breadth of our military assistance relationship as well as on operational issues involving Turkey and the U.S. I know my Greek Desk colleague had the same kind of contacts at the Pentagon and so even in normal times, there was a close working relationship between the two Departments on Greek and Turkish matters. Throughout the crisis we set up shop in the State Department's Operations Center and DOD, then as now, had a number of representatives formally assigned to the Ops Center. When we set up a task force to deal with the crisis they had people formally assigned to that task force. It was a very close working relationship between the two Departments, and a very productive one. I didn't sense when I was working on Turkey and Greece that you had very often a State Department assessment that was very different from the DOD assessment, or that the

policy prescriptions of one of the two Departments was different from that of the other. I think we all saw things pretty much the same way.

Q: Our Ambassador in Turkey at the time was who?

KIRBY: Our Ambassador was Bill Macomber.

Q: How did you find him?

KIRBY: I haven't seen Bill Macomber for many years, but I consider him a friend. Initially we had a couple of “run-ins”. I initially thought, maybe unfairly, that Bill was trying to tell me what to do on a few things that was different from what my superiors in Washington were telling me, and I thought it was abundantly clear that I was working for Washington and not the Ambassador. I wanted good relations with him but I wasn't working for him. We sorted that out successfully. Bill became a friend. I think we particularly became close after Congress cut off arms assistance to Turkey as a result of the Turkish intervention in Cyprus. When the Administration (President Ford and Secretary Kissinger) began to try very hard to turn that around we all became involved in the effort. That led to the negotiation of new arms agreements with the Turks. In November 1975 we kicked off a round of arms negotiations and for that first round of negotiations in Ankara, our lead negotiator was Ambassador Macomber. I was asked to lead to Ankara a four-person team from DOD and the State Department to assist the ambassador in the negotiations. And although he and I had already been working very comfortably together for a year and a half, we then became quite close. He was always very supportive and very hospitable, and I appreciated that. Some people found it easier to work for him than others.

Q: He had a renowned temper for one thing

KIRBY: Well, yes, he did. I think, though, that the temper was greatly affected by a basically good heart. I think that once you established to Bill's satisfaction that a) you knew your business, b) you were supportive of him, and c) you were not a door mat but were

going to comment on issues straightforwardly—i.e., once you won his respect, I think you could work with him very successfully. So we worked very well together.

Q: How did the Department respond to the reports you were getting from the Embassy and from him on the immediate time of...just prior to and just after the Turkish intervention?

KIRBY: I think that their reports were essentially in forming our views here in Washington of what Turkish attitudes were and of what Turkish policy steps were likely to be. My memory of it is that in Ankara we had a very senior embassy team, a very able team which collectively they understood Turkey very well. Their reports were very accurate with respect to how the Turks saw the U.S. We may not have agreed with Turkish perceptions, and in fact we didn't always, but the embassy's ability to assess Turkish perceptions and then to make a shrewd guess as to what policy steps the Turks were likely to take was pretty accurate.

Q: How about the reverse? The Ambassador in Greece was Henry Tasca to begin with, who was actually moved out rather rapidly. Initially how did you find what was coming out of Athens?

KIRBY: I can't give you a totally informed response. As your question suggests, I was, of course, reading the telegraphic traffic out of Athens. I don't have a precise a memory of that as John Day or the people who worked on Greece every minute of their day would have. While reporting from Athens was probably reasonably accurate, I think most of us in EUR felt that Ambassador Tasca and his Embassy were perhaps more inclined to apologize for the Greek Generals and the Colonels than was warranted. We sometimes felt that there was a bit of special pleading for the Greek clients and maybe not as sophisticated an understanding of how the Turks would react to certain perceived slights or insults as there might have been. I would defer to people who actually worked on the Greek account but that is my impression twenty years later. Certainly, Ambassador Tasca astonished, and even distressed, top Department officials when he recommended

that the U.S. use its Sixth Fleet to turn back, or otherwise thwart Turkish naval operations, after the Turks had begun their intervention in Cyprus.

Q: What about Tom Boyatt as desk officer in Cyprus. Because its become sort of the thing to talk about Tom and with Henry Kissinger and all that. Things did not go well between them.

KIRBY: Tom is a friend and I can't remember exactly when Tom left the Cyprus desk. My memory of it is that he departed sometime late in the fall of 1974, i.e., after the Turkish intervention in Cyprus.

Q: Not necessarily because I was in a senior seminar which started in September and Tom had been sort of bounced off the desk and put in the seminar in 1974.

KIRBY: I don't like to return a question with a question. Is it your impression that he had not expected to leave the desk that summer or fall? Because I thought, and this could be totally wrong, I thought I recalled that when I came onto the Turkish side of things at the beginning of 1974, that Tom had told me that he would be finished on the desk in the summer.

Q: He may have been planning to leave. But anyway, there was some clash with Kissinger on that point.

KIRBY: I had heard that. He did feel passionately about Cyprus. I've always heard rumors of a clash. I'm not dodging the bullet on this, but I wasn't present and didn't know anything about it. That rumor was there that Tom, feeling passionately about what U.S. policy should be, made some strong representations. But whether those representations were in fact made, and in what form, I don't know.

Q: How did you find Henry Kissinger? Because by this time he was Secretary of State and all of a sudden you have this full scale crisis because it was between two NATO allies. Did you have dealings with him?

KIRBY: I did. Many of the instructions out to Ambassadors in Ankara and Athens were authorized directly by the Secretary himself. Assistant Secretary Hartman, who saw a lot of Kissinger anyway, generally on Soviet matters, also saw him regularly on Turkey and Greece from 1974-76. He frequently took me with him to the Secretary's office as we had negotiations with the Turks, or as we were getting ready for the Turkish Foreign Minister to visit Washington, or what have you. So, I saw a lot of the Secretary. Obviously, and I'm not alone in this, I was enormously impressed by Mr. Kissinger. Apart from his obvious intellect and energy, one of the things that impressed me, looking at it from my own narrow perspective at the time, was that this Secretary, who in 1974 had many other things to worry about—the China policy, Vietnam, the whole spectrum of issues in Europe, the beginning of Soviet “monkeying” around in Africa and so on—nonetheless dedicated an enormous amount of personal time to the Greek and Turkish dossiers, including some trips out to the area. I think it was largely at the Secretary's urging that President—Mr. Ford, of course, had become President in August of 1974, about a month after Turkey intervened in Cyprus, became personally involved and dedicated a fair amount of time to Greek-Turkish matters. I think the thing that caused the deep involvement of the Executive Branch's top figures, was the fact that the Greek lobby in the Congress became involved and, in effect, began trying to dictate policy to the Administration. Mr. Kissinger has, and can, obviously, speak for himself, but as nearly as I could figure out at the time, Kissinger's strong involvement was driven by two things. First, he really was very deeply concerned that the southeastern flank of NATO not be compromised—i.e., that Greece and Turkey not go to war, that there be a stand-down to the extent possible, and that peace be restored. Secondly, I think that he and this new President were stunned by the extent to which the Congress, driven by Greek lobby was, in this early post-Vietnam period, trying to take foreign policy into its own hands by calling for a cutoff of aid to Turkey. The

Secretary felt very strongly about the constitutional aspects of this. He was concerned not only in terms of U.S. relations with Turkey and the implications for NATO, but also that Congress not be permitted to get the “bit in its teeth” on foreign policy and dictate to the administration. And so the Secretary was really centrally involved in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus matters for the next two years (1974-76) from my certain knowledge, and President Ford was as well.

Q: Did you find that the Turkish Embassy, which was going to be the main interpreter of events in the United States to its government, understood the role of Congress and the role of the Greek lobby, or was it a matter of saying oh, you in the State Department know what we're after and you've got to do something about it?

KIRBY: Yes and no. They understood it intellectually if you sat them down as we sometimes did and walked them through it, saying, “Look this is our Constitution. These things are happening to you for the following reasons.” The Turkish Ambassador and his Deputy was a very good man, and their counselors, too. They would say, “Yes, yes, we understand that, absolutely.” In their minds they did. But in their hearts and guts they didn't, because their bottom line always was, “But if the President would just make one more effort—he is the President and he can turn this around.” They didn't say it antagonistically. They appreciated Gerry Ford's efforts and Kissinger's efforts. I think that throughout this drama the Turks believed that Kissinger and Ford were making a reasonable effort, but we always had the feeling that the Turkish mindset was that somebody should ultimately be in charge of U.S. policy, and if the administration would just make that one additional effort, somehow it would cause those other fellows to do the right thing. But that's true of so many foreign governments. They may have a text book understanding of how our Constitution works, but when it gets to an issue they care about it's, “Why don't people follow the President?”

Q: You kept going until 1976, is that right?

KIRBY: July of 1976.

Q: And the whole time I assume that was your major concentration?

KIRBY: My major concentration was on trying to find ways to restore peace in Cyprus and do something about aiding Cypriot refugees and something about U.S. assistance to Turkey. We tried to find ways to make sure things didn't deteriorate further between Greece and Turkey. The main bread and butter item, day in and day out, was trying to persuade the Congress to unblock aid for Turkey. As I mentioned earlier, during that period we negotiated what came to be known as the “billion dollar arms agreement”. All of that included several trips to Ankara, as well as to Athens and Nicosia. The grand finale was when the Turkish Foreign Minister, Mr. Caglayangil, came here during the Spring of 1976, when we finally concluded negotiations successfully. And then we tried to sell that package to the Congress, but they didn't buy it. It was to be later, I think, during the Carter administration, when they finally loosened up and permitted military equipment to go to Turkey.

Q: Did you talk to Congressional people?

KIRBY: Oh yes, very frequently. We did everything we could think of. There were many votes on the Hill and many efforts. Department of State people at every level talked to the Congress. We brought in Ambassadors from abroad, e.g., David Bruce from NATO, to talk to the Congress. I accompanied senior people like him around on the Hill as we sort of parceled out the Congress. I myself also regularly met with Congressional staffers and directly with many members of Congress. We saw Senators and members of the House to try to persuade them, to educate them, as we saw it, to Turkey's role in NATO and to try to explain why it was self-defeating for the U.S. to punish or hold a valuable NATO ally at arms length.

Q: Did you find yourself up against an impossible opponent, that is the Greek American lobby, which had permeated our society in many places. They were the Sheriffs, business people, doctors, they really covered the country more than say the American Jews did. They were in more places.

KIRBY: They were very influential, very engaging people, then and now. We're talking about friends of yours and mine, often very close friends.

Q: On the subject of Turks, even with the 5th generation Greeks in the United States, you're up against...it's a myth almost.

KIRBY: I don't know if I would characterize it that way. One has to take it for what it is. You know they are valuable Americans. Consistent with your question, though, I might note that I went into many Congressional offices and, at the end of my presentation, received the following response from my Congressional interlocutor: “Intellectually, I agree with you. I don't have any doubt about what you've said about the importance of Turkey to NATO but my constituency has voters who feel deeply on the other side of this issue, and I'm not going to vote contrary to their views.” It was an honorable way of putting it in a democracy. I walked out wishing it were otherwise, that somehow the national interest as I saw it could overcome more parochial interests, but that's what we were up against. Kissinger used to refer to this, in his joking way, to try to lighten the atmosphere a little bit with his Turkish interlocutors. I heard him say to the Turkish Foreign Minister once, when the Turkish Foreign Minister was pressing him: “Why can't you and the President turn this around...tell people we're valuable allies and get on with the alliance?” “Well, Mr. Minister, I need your help. There is one thing you can do, and then maybe we can turn it around. I'm not sure, I haven't asked my legal advisor, but probably what I'm going to suggest to you is not, strictly speaking, legal. However, if you could somehow infiltrate one to two million Turks across the Canadian border into America this weekend, and somehow get them ready to vote in our next election, we could probably begin to do something about it.” And the Turkish Foreign Minister simply said, “Dr. Kissinger, I think you're joking with me.” But

it was that kind of thing, and so one has to analyze it for what it was. It was not surprising that our fellow citizens of Greek extraction and their supporters might see things through a prism that might be a bit different from that of others. Not surprising and not dishonorable —that's simply the way it was.

Q: Was there anything else we should cover on the Turkish side before we wrap this up?

KIRBY: I think that's about it. It was a fascinating time, and we did things, by the way, that desk officers do more of now than we had up to that point, although I had earlier done some of it on the India desk. In these campaigns to turn the Hill around, to get the Congress to reverse itself, we had many people on Capitol Hill say, “Yes, when the next debate comes around we'll be glad to give speeches on behalf of changing policy and ending the embargo on Turkey, but send me a speech.” I remember one day, dictating ten speeches at one stretch, little 3-4 minute homilies, most of which were pretty much used verbatim on the Hill. It was a good period, an exciting period. Sometimes in that kind of job you learn a lot of things quickly. That was a wonderful experience because you had to be going on all cylinders at all times and not spend a lot of time spinning wheels. I remember one example, a kind of thing which seemed to happen all the time in those days. I got a call at 4:00 o'clock one afternoon from people in the Secretariat, the 7th floor of the State Department asking, “Where is that memorandum for the President which is due at 4:00?” I thought that since I had never heard of the matter, I would use one of the old comedy acts on the radio and replied: “I'll bite, where is the memorandum for the President?” And they said, “Don't be funny with us, you mean you don't know?” I said that this was the first I had heard of it. It turned out that a message hadn't been passed, and so we really didn't know about the tasking requirement. They were very apologetic but said, “Can you nonetheless deliver it before the close of business?” It was, of course, on something to do with our diplomacy with Turkey. My office and I said, well, if that's an instruction, of course we'll do it. I went into my boss, and asked on the issue, “What do they want?” He looked at me, not unkindly, and said, “They don't know what they want, they are waiting for you to tell them.” That was a good lesson. He was right. That was my role...to tell them

what they ought to be wanting in policy terms. So, I went in and thought for about five minutes and then came up with something that seemed to pass muster very, very well. I later reflected that if as a junior officer someone had told me two weeks in advance that I would have to write a memorandum for the President, I'd have sat around stewing about it. But under pressure of time, your thoughts are there...it's just a matter of bringing them together. So, it was an exhausting experience in a way, but it was one of the best...there have been many good learning experiences in the Foreign Service, but that was one of the best ones. We were all operating at full speed in trying circumstances. I think, though, that in those unsatisfactory times, our government and our Department of State came through as well as we could in trying to make peace between two NATO allies in order to save the Southeastern flank of NATO.

Q: Well, next time, where did you go? We're talking about 1976.

KIRBY: I arrived in August of 1976, in Brussels to become political counselor at the U.S. Mission to the European Communities, now known as the European Union.

Q: You were there from when to when?

KIRBY: From the summer of 1976 to the summer of 1979.

Q: We got you in Brussels, 1976-1979. What was the NATO situation in that period? Was this the year of Europe or something like that?

KIRBY: I think the year of Europe came later. The question is a good one. I suppose for Europeans, any year since World War II has been an interesting year in the development of Europe. The period we were in Brussels had a number of fascinations for us. There was a lot going on within the Common Market context or within the European Communities context as they were called. During those three years, I would pick out three things that were especially interesting in regard to the development of European institutions which we were tracking.

One was that the negotiations were going forward for the enlargement of the Community. Greek negotiations for accession to the Community were in their last year when we arrived, and during my period there the EC opened negotiations with Spain and Portugal as well, looking forward to their potential accession.

The second thing of interest was that during that period, for the first time, the European communities decided to go for direct elections to the European Parliament, one of the institutions in the Communities framework.

And thirdly, this was the early stage of the attempt by the member countries of the European Communities to forge a common foreign policy. Their phrase for it was “political cooperation”. This was the early period in “political cooperation,” and by that they meant cooperation in the foreign policy field. Those three developments were taking place during those years. It was also a very interesting time in terms of U.S. relations with the European Communities. Of course that's an on-going saga. Trade relations are always important, and we were very much involved in a variety of trade matters, discussions, negotiations with the Europeans at that time. And then, another thing that has always been of interest to our USEC mission, but with the dossier being particularly “ripe” during our time, is Europe's relations, trade and aid relations with the developing world. The so-called Lome II Treaty with forty plus countries in Asia, the Pacific, and the Caribbean with which the Europeans have trade and, particularly, aid relationships was negotiated and signed during that period. So taken all together, there was quite a lot to observe and report on. I mentioned that I was political counselor. The European community had a large political dimension despite the overshadowing economic dimension or dimensions, so both the political and economic sections in USEC were in effect involved in observing and reporting on both political and economic affairs. I used to think at the time that my section's work on some days was maybe 70% political and 30% economic, and then the next day, it would be the other way around, since we were doing all the reporting to Washington on

all the major EC institutions and the decisions taken within those institutions including on economic matters.

Q: First, a bit about the mission. Who was the Ambassador and how did it fit into the complex you had in Brussels?

KIRBY: There were three U.S. missions in Brussels at the time, as there are now: the Embassy to the Kingdom of Belgium, the U.S. mission to the European Communities (where I served), and then the U.S.-NATO mission. The Ambassador at USEC during my period was Dean Hinton, a very senior American diplomat. He had successively as Deputy Chief of Mission, Bob Morris and then Denis Lamb, who were also extremely able, capable officers. It was a mission of roughly 20 officers, with some additional supporting staff. Included in the officer complement, were two USIA officers, as I recall. It was, if I may say so—and this sounds a little self-serving—a first-class mission. People on the staff were extremely competent, extremely well-versed on their dossiers. We were able to concentrate on the substance of what we were supposed to be doing, the substance of the emergence of modern European institutions and U.S. relationships to them. We didn't have any administrative or other kinds of roles that we had to play. Fortunately, the U.S. Embassy just down the street from our Mission, the Embassy to the Kingdom, handled administrative matters including housing, communications, budget for all three of the American missions in Brussels. My perception was that the Embassy handled those matters very well. It was a big task. They kept us all reasonably well satisfied. Maybe there were some who weren't well-satisfied, but it seemed to me that administratively that it all ran pretty well and that the intermeshing of the three missions was pretty successful. But that meant that at USEC we didn't have to do our own administration, and so we could concentrate on the economics and politics of Europe. I should also mention labor developments as well, which was in my section.

Q: How did Dean Hinton operate?

KIRBY: I liked his operating style very, very much. Dean was obviously very much in control of things, and very self-confident, as one with his years of experience and background would be expected to be. Yet he gave an almost amazing amount of latitude, I thought, to people on the staff. He handled some of the very senior contacts at Berlemont, at the European Commission headquarters and those with his fellow ambassadors. He held daily staff meetings and was always available if one needed guidance. But if I may quote him, his comment to me as I arrived as political counselor (with a chuckle) was, “I expect the counselors to run the mission, if you need me, I'm here, but I won't be looking over your shoulder all the time.” And he was as good as his word. And the two DCMs, taking their cue from Dean, were first-class, and their style was excellent as well. It was very much a matter of their allowing their political and economic counselors to sign out, to authorize the transmissions to Washington of the great preponderance of reporting and analytical cables. The political and economic sections also had major representational responsibilities. But clearly we had to exercise judgment as to when we needed the front office on something. I felt that because of the daily staff meetings, and the quality of the Mission's people that it all meshed amazingly well.

Q: The EC was talking about the admission of Greece into it, shortly to be followed to it at that time a very poor Portugal and particularly at that time a very poor Spain.

KIRBY: Spain was in better shape than Portugal.

Q: This was obviously inviting...sort of like having public housing coming into where you were living. I mean, these were poor neighbors. What was the feeling that you were getting from your European colleagues about the arrival of these people at that time and also how did we view it?

KIRBY: Well, I think those are very good questions. My feeling then and now, has been that the Europeans—on this issue—were to be complemented on what was essentially for them an act of faith. They swallowed hard. They recognized that the economic cost and

the cost of Community administration and coordination were likely to be very, very high for a considerable period of time as the Community would begin to absorb first Greece (which also was not in very good economic shape) and then Spain and Portugal. They recognized the cost would be high. There was, however, a strong feeling in Europe at that time—i.e., in Western Europe and particularly in the core countries of the Common Market that Western Europe had to be made whole, that the Iberian Peninsula at long last had to be brought into the mainstream of political and economic life in Western Europe, and that Greece, as the original “cradle of democracy” should be brought in to stabilize its political moorings. And there was a belief that if you could get Spain in (they never that I can remember considered taking in one Iberian country without the other) democracy would be shored up in Spain, and it would be bound to the Western system. It hadn't been so very long before that Franco had died and that, later, there had been a military coup attempt. So there was a strong feeling that if you could get Spain into the major western institutions, NATO and the Common Market, that this would stabilize the country and bind it to the West. And, it was generally recognized that it would be very hard to sell NATO membership in Spain. Many Europeans and Americans were actually more concerned about getting Spain into NATO than into the Common Market, but it was generally understood that there would be resistance in Spain about bringing them into NATO alone. You would have to bring them into the major political and economic grouping as well. And then there was also the feeling that you couldn't just leave Portugal twisting alone, which had been a very early member of NATO going back to the early 1950's. Wait a minute; they were a founding member, weren't they, in 1949? Yes, Portugal was a NATO founding member in 1949 and had experienced its own recent emergence from decades of dictatorship with some ensuing initial political instability. So there was a strong sense that it was important to get Portugal into Western Europe's main economic and political institutions, as well. It was an act of faith by the Europeans, but with full recognition that there would be some future bumps in the road in terms of smooth functioning of Community institutions. Above all, the major Community core countries, particularly Germany, France, and the others, would have to pay a considerable amount of money

during a prolonged transition period to bring these countries in. You asked how the U.S. viewed it. We supported enlargement on roughly the same grounds as the Europeans. We felt the West would be stronger with all of these countries in the major Western European groupings.

Q: Was the feeling as we were doing...but actually we had been right from Dean Acheson on strong supporters of getting Western Europe together. Was there in back of things, the feeling that we got dragged into two wars because of the bloody-mindedness of different countries in Western Europe and this is a security apparatus that will keep us from foreign involvement?

KIRBY: Absolutely. I think that was a very strong American feeling then and I hope and believe it is now. Earlier I commented that I thought the Europeans were to be complimented for their act of faith, even though in dollars and cents terms it would be costly for a while. I think that I may suggest that Americans are also to be complimented for their act of faith in supporting the enlargement of European institutions. We did it for reasons that you have just stated, feeling that if Europe could create the institutions that would keep Europe from having more of what Dean Hinton used to refer to as its “civil wars”, that would be in American strategic and broader interests. We took this stand even though we knew at the same time that this could be creating a trading entity that would prove somewhat costly to the U.S. in the external trade field. But as we worked out a balance of U.S. interests, we concluded it was in our broader interests to be supportive of these institutions. And I think that manifestly has been a correct decision all along, the way we supported those institutions.

Q: How did we find, again at that time, the role of France? France as far as America was concerned is always the odd man out.

KIRBY: The role of France in the enlargement of institutions and EC membership? France, my memory of it, is that France took a positive and supportive role in terms of

enlargement, that they were in favor of bringing Greece in and they were in favor of bringing in the Iberian Peninsula countries. France also supported the development and extension of Community institutions—direct elections to the European Parliament and to development of political cooperation.

Q: Were you pretty much a reporting officer on this going around, making your calls, finding out how people felt? Or was the United States pushing something which you were involved by saying, "I hope you'll do this...sort of thing?

KIRBY: In terms of the political section's work, I think it was both of these. Certainly, we did a lot of reporting and analysis. The European Community institutions are so far-reaching and are making so many decisions all the time on economic, trade, agricultural support matters that arguably affect American interests or at least are of interest to us, that the Mission has always been required to do a lot of reporting on trends in the community, community law and community decisions, etc. But at the same time, there is a fair amount of representational work, representing U.S. positions to the EC. I'll give you one example of something I got drawn into. I mentioned earlier in these interviews, that before going to Brussels, I was responsible for U.S.-Turkish relations in the State Department and that I had something to do with Cyprus and Greece, as well. Without boring you with a lot of detail, within the Community, the Cyprus set of issues were highly salient during the time that I was in Brussels. What trade policies the European Community should adopt towards Cyprus, what assistance, monetary and refugee assistance they would give them, etc. and Washington had a set of views on those issues. We wanted to work along parallel lines on Cyprus because of a European and American joint interest in Cyprus, Turkey and Greece. So Washington wanted to make sure that in trade and aid matters, as well as on political issues, we were not working at cross purposes with the Europeans. Since I was supposed to have knowledge of that area, I was asked by Ambassador Hinton and by Washington, to keep a very close eye on the development of community policies towards Cyprus, particularly Cyprus refugee assistance, and to weigh in and make sure that our views were regularly known. And so I found myself representing our views on Cyprus, Greece and

Turkey at high levels in the community. There was also a question of what the EC should do about Turkey. And that tricky question is still roiling the European waters with Turkey even today. Turkey and Greece both became associate members of the Community long before I went to Brussels, although I've forgotten exactly when it was. Greece has been a full member of the Community since about 1981 and Turkey would like to be a member of the Community but has not been able to get in. So, again, there were questions about the European Communities' relations with Turkey about how the Europeans planned to make their non-accession to the Common Market palatable to them. We would weigh in with a fair number of representations. While the U.S. could not force the EC to take Turkey in as a full member, we could, and did, emphasize to the West Europeans Turkey's reliability as a NATO partner, its dedication to the Western cause, and its hope that its concerns would be addressed equitably by the other Europeans.

Q: Was there any feeling going to the Turkish side? To me, countries who come into the European Economic Community have a veto power. Is it a one veto?

KIRBY: Essentially, yes, they do.

Q: It doesn't take a genius to figure out that the Greeks, once they were in, would do anything they could to keep the Turks out. I mean out of visceral reflexes or something.

KIRBY: That happened over the years. You are quite right. Although, in strict fairness to everybody, I'm inclined to think that even if Greece had not been a full member of the Communities these past fourteen years, Turkey would still not be in. Purely apart from Greeks blocking the forward movement of the Turkish dossier in the EC, there are still strong feelings elsewhere in the European Community today that Turkey has not met the full democratic test, particularly on human rights for admission to the Common Market. So they would be having some difficulties with full membership even if Greece didn't exist.

Q: Going back to this time, I've never dealt with Europe. What countries were not in?

KIRBY: France, Germany, Italy and the three Benelux countries were the six original EC members. And then in the 1970's you had the accession of Great Britain, Ireland and Denmark. That took it to nine. There were nine members when I arrived in Brussels. Then the Greeks concluded their negotiations for accession and, as I mentioned, sometime in the 1979-81 period the Spanish and Portuguese began their negotiations with the Common Market and came in as full members during the 1980's. So with the accession of Greece, Portugal and Spain it brought the Community to twelve—which was where things stood until the recent expansionary round.

Q: Were we making any moves to try to encourage the Scandinavian countries to come in, or Austria?

KIRBY: I don't know that we, the U.S., were making any moves to try to persuade them to come in. People who worked in Washington at the time would know more about that than I would. There was at that time, in any case, the beginnings of a closer working relationship between the two main European trade bodies, the Common Market and EFTA, which grouped the Scandinavian countries. They were beginning to talk to each other and engage productively during that period, and my memory is that we did encourage that. We thought it was a good idea for all these European countries to be taking this step toward each other. Then, eventually if it did evolve into something more than that, then fine.

Q: How did we feel and what reactions did you get from the other people about the British coming in? I mean the French had kept them out for a while and the British had not come in with any great enthusiasm on the part of many of its citizens and this was still sort of the teething stage.

KIRBY: There were tensions between Britain and the EC at the time revolving around some of the same issues that have been roiling the waters for them again recently. The British in the late 1970's were complaining very vocally, very vociferously, that they were paying more into the Community than they were getting out of it. The balance was an

unfavorable one, and in every negotiation with the rest of the EC, the British were trying to get more of a return flow of funds from Community organs than they had gotten up to that time. And there was still great ambivalence about EC membership among the British public. I mean, the referendum to join had won in Britain, but there was still considerable sentiment in Britain against membership, and so it was an issue in domestic politics. That then caused any British government of the day to insist very hard in Brussels that it get its full benefits and rights out of the Community. Although it was not a day in and day out acrimonious set of relationships, there were tensions in the Community, which was still "digesting Britain" at the time, if you will.

Q: How were you all received? Was there any time when you found them saying why don't you Americans just butt out while we just do our thing? How did this go at that time?

KIRBY: Obviously, my overall response to that would be that with occasional grumbling, community practitioners understood very well why the Americans were interested in what they were doing in Europe and in what was happening in Europe, and they saw it as a two-way street. They themselves saw a need to work as constructively and harmoniously as they reasonably could with the Americans. But certainly on these issues that they considered their private preserve—e.g., what their relations were going to be with the ex-colonial world for example and the nature of their trade and assistance therewith—they took a somewhat proprietary air. We used to bicker over such issues a bit. They would frequently, in effect, tell us to "butt-out". But on the broad philosophical issues of whether the Americans and Europeans should be talking to each other on how the Western world was going to hang together generally, and to trade with the rest of the world, they recognized it as a common interest, I think.

Q: Was there any talk at the time about what has now taken place in the Western Hemisphere...the NAFTA?

KIRBY: There was certainly not anything that we were discussing with the Europeans, I don't believe. I don't have a strong memory of that. I think that at the conceptual level it was probably one of those things that was floating around in Washington and elsewhere, —"You know one day, we could do the following..." I don't think it was a stronger gleam in anybody's eye at that time. I don't think it was a subject of real policy debate—at least not as far as I was aware.

Q: What were you getting on the reception of the Carter Administration? You were basically there during the Carter Administration and they came in as having been out of the Presidency for some time and they came charging in and there were some things like the so-called "Neutron bomb", and the Olympic business—maybe that didn't happen during your watch there, but like all new eager administrations they went off in one direction and then kept moving around...there was sort of an uncertainty there. Did you find this as a problem?

KIRBY: Europeans were a little puzzled at times. I think they felt that the Administration during at least part of that period, with good will to be sure, was involved in a learning exercise, and I think they were a little bit concerned from time to time about how we and they were going to "gel" and forge common policies toward the Eastern Bloc. Let me digress to say that thoughtful Europeans, the ones who knew something about American politics and the American national psyche were probably, as I recall, prepared to "cut us a little slack". In a sense, they recognized that we were, as a people, recovering from the twin traumas of Watergate and the Vietnam War. And I think they understood to some extent, although imperfectly...Europeans don't totally understand American politics anymore than we do theirs, but the thoughtful ones understood that Carter's election was part of that...an attempt to emerge from the trauma and move off in new directions. I think they, the Europeans, probably felt that we hadn't yet wholly found our way. But, then, the Europeans weren't showing a lot of leadership on anything either at that time. They were coming out of some of their own traumas, and not quite sure how to deal with

the end of dictatorships in Spain and Portugal which had occurred in the mid-1970's. And Greece posed its set of problems. While by the late 1970's things looked somewhat better in Greece and Cyprus than earlier in the decade, the West Europeans had a lot of preoccupations about the Eastern Mediterranean. And, the Europeans remained uncertain about ongoing developments in Eastern Europe. And so, as I said earlier, there was a very strong sentiment in Europe that we have heard in other periods of history: “Why doesn't somebody show some leadership around here, in our neighborhood, in the West?” It's not a new or startling idea—such criticism occurs regularly. I remember that on one occasion in a seminar with some senior Europeans, Americans were being criticized for something and at the end of the day, the most thoughtful European present looked across the table at the Americans and said, “This has been a heavy afternoon, but don't take it badly. Remember that for you Americans, it's part of your role in the world...it's the way we Europeans will always treat you.” He continued: “When you don't show leadership, we're going to sit around demanding that you show it and criticize you for being feckless and spineless and what have you, and then when you snap to and show leadership, with an equally high decibel count we'll claim that you're brutish and overbearing and trying to railroad us...you can't win. That's the price of leadership.” And that particular man's view was that (and maybe that's why his words appealed to me so much) if you Americans don't show leadership, nobody will. And without being unkind to Europeans which I don't mean to do, I had the very strong feeling at the end of the 1970's, and used to say so to Congressional and other U.S. visitors to Brussels, that despite serious European attempts to forge a common foreign policy in the EC, I did not think that in the near term we could expect Europe to be able to take major political and political-military initiatives. And, indeed I feel that way in a sense today. Despite all that's happened in Eastern Europe and so on and all the good things that have happened in Europe in the intervening period. I think Bosnia, which has been difficult for all of us, is a case in point. The West Europeans, even with a common policy under the EC, often work at cross purposes with each other, which is what we saw three or four years ago in Central Europe.

Q: Really at a certain point if we're going through it as of today, the United States trying to turn the whole mess of the break-up of Yugoslavia over to Europe and after a couple of years and a bloody civil war, we eventually had to step in and I don't know how it will work out but certainly nobody else, I mean, we're "leading the pack".

KIRBY: That is right. When this (Yugoslavia's break-up) all began, in 1991-92, my wife and I deliberately thought ourselves back to 1978-79 and said the Europeans wouldn't have been able to do it then and they can't now. This was not because Europeans are deficient in any way; it has more to do with their institutions, ongoing national rivalries, and all the things that roil them historically.

Q: What about the role of Germany? I mean, Germany is sort of the "black star" of things in European affairs. You hear about the French yelling and taking an opposite tack and the British being reluctant to do this or sometimes that...but Germany is still the major power in that block and yet one is never particularly aware of their taking leadership. How did you find, this is my impression from a distance now, the role of Germany during this period?

KIRBY: In the Common Market and European Council? Well, certainly during my time in Brussels (1976-79) and based on everything I've read and heard since, the Germans have played a prominent and constructive role in EC affairs even if they have usually been reluctant to assert broad leadership in Europe. I say this with great admiration for the role they have played in the Common Market. I think they have worked hard, indeed worked overtime, to prove they are good Europeans. They have a past, of course, and they worry about their past. They know how they are perceived in Europe. The French have always believed, and this was evident in the late 1970's, that the way you corral Germany...the way you keep it from doing things it has done in the past, is by binding it into institutional relationships where it has to be a good citizen. Well, the Germans accepted that approach and said, in effect, "You're probably right. The way we all avoid being "bad" citizens is that we embrace each other so tightly that out on the margins miscreants can't do bad things." So, the Germans worked very hard, I think, at making EC institutions work.

The bureaucracies of the European institutions are peopled by bureaucrats from all the member countries, and the Germans, like the French, send very, very able people to those institutions. As I talked with them at that time, and talked with people in “think tanks” back in Bonn, I got the impression that they really meant it when they said, “We've really got to make this thing work, this is how we live together and ensure that nobody in Europe does anything that takes us back to the bad old days.” Now, again, you put it as the “black star”. Germany is, in a way, a 600 lb. gorilla. Their weight...they overshadow everything because of their economic muscle and they have to be taken into account; it is understandable that their partners scrutinize their every move to ensure they are remaining good Europeans. But today the feeling around the European community is that the Germans have played a very constructive role in Community institutions.

Q: How did we view, and again your contacts and the growing European community...Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union? Did this play any role at all, I mean, just knowing it was there?

KIRBY: I used to call fairly regularly on some of the upper level officials in the European Commission, (the executive body of the EC) who dealt with Eastern Europe because in the late 1970's, and on into the 1980's, the Common Market was consciously reaching out to the East to establish communications and to try to establish a network of working relationships. Specifically, they were trying to initiate negotiations with COMECON, the economic organization of the Warsaw Pact countries. The two sides would meet every so often and issue reasonably hopeful and forward-looking communiques which had very little substance. During my period in Brussels they never got into real negotiations. The EC was trying to see if it could work out some limited trade arrangements with the East which would somehow bind the East closer to Western Europe and make the East less inclined to go to war. The EC kept a very close watch on Poland and those Eastern European countries that they felt were the most fragile in terms of relations with the Soviet Union. The EC was extending certain types of aid and trade assistance to those countries at that

time, and we used to spend a lot of time, in our discussions with EC officials, speculating on how the Soviet empire was going to go.

Q: Also, it was part of the Carter policy if I recall to try to have some trade openings to the Soviet Union. We sent Arthur Watson to Moscow, who was basically a businessman, and this was until the Afghanistan thing in December of 1979. This was not inconsistent with...

KIRBY: We and the Europeans were working on parallel lines to see if we could create some new relationships that would point in a peaceful direction away from the Cold War.

Q: How much, as this whole thing developed, did trade problems, obviously this is of great interest to us...and I'm thinking of Congress and farmer groups, etc., how did that play as far as your operation went?

KIRBY: Well, I don't have total command of all the details at this remove. Then, as today, there were areas in which our trading policies and those of the European Community were in conflict. We felt that the Common Market's Common Agricultural Policy (called the CAP), which posits very high support prices for almost all agricultural products, was contrary to international trading patterns and that certainly it kept a lot of our products out of the Common Market countries. This was a fairly regular bone of contention. And sometimes in negotiations, it would come to...”if you're going to send your cognac into the United States, then we should be able to get Florida's orange juice and California's raisins into your markets.” There was sometimes a fair amount of acrimony which broke into the press. The EC would counter by arguing that we unfairly subsidized our wheat farmers and took markets they might otherwise have gotten into. And so it went. There were substantial trade issues that we were in contact on all the time. The EC's TABEX arrangements—stabilization funds they tried to set up for certain commodities in some of the old colonial countries with which the Europeans still had major relationships—was another area of friction. Or perhaps coffee and soybeans, we felt that some of the stability exchange arrangements skewed the patterns of world trade, and so on. We and the Europeans

joined in very serious discussions on those issues and so there was regularly enough to keep us all hopping. Not all of these issues were totally resolved to our satisfaction, of course, but these were the kind of negotiations and discussions that went on fairly regularly.

Q: Were there any issues particularly dealing with Africa where the United States and the EC were sort of "at odds"?

KIRBY: I think there were no issues where we were at odds on Africa that came into the Brussels context at that time. Again, I may be missing something on this, but simply going from memory, I don't recall that we had any great concerns about the aid and trade relationships (apart from some of the Stabex arrangements that I mentioned) that they were establishing or maintaining through the Lome Convention agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific developing countries. Certainly there would have been at that time some differences of emphasis on how we and the Europeans viewed certain critical political issues in Africa. There were some differences on South Africa, and some on Angola, for example, but these differences would have been played out largely in other arenas, especially the UN. The Common Market institutions and our exchanges with them at that time were not as such, designed to handle this kind of issue. I should say, however, that the European Parliament to which I referred before, considered its brief to embrace the entire world...economic, political, and social issues included. They could debate any issue in the Parliament. The Parliament wasn't a decision making body, it was a debating body that adopted a lot of resolutions. It would sometimes adopt a resolution on one African issue or another, as in other parts of the world, that wasn't totally "in line" with the U.S. way of thinking. We used to weigh in with the European Parliamentarians to try to make sure our views were reflected. That was part of my job and that of USEC's Political Section, which I headed.

Q: A little bit about the way we dealt with the UN in a way.

KIRBY: Yes.

Q: How did we view this movement that you mentioned at the beginning of our talk today? About having this Parliament elected directly and all?

KIRBY: Well, it wasn't ours to decide. But as a general proposition, I remember that the U.S. applauded the move. We thought it was a step toward greater democracy in EC institutions and therefore a desirable thing.

Q: Well, is there anything else we should cover about this particular period? Were there any events...?

KIRBY: I don't think so. During that period there was a visit by President Carter, a very quick one-day visit in Brussels as part of a European trip. I can't remember which year it was. He visited all the important institutions in Brussels...visited NATO, visited with the EC Commissioners (the EC executive body) and I think had a meeting with the King of Belgium, though I'm less certain of the latter. But the President's going personally to EC headquarters, and meeting with the Commissioners even for a short time, was designed to show that we, the United States, continued to consider important our relationship with the Community, purely apart from our important bilateral relationships with EC member states. We had a lot of U.S. visitors. Some would come for NATO reasons, some for EC reasons, some for both. There were a lot of Congressional visitors during that period. I remember, also, that Chief Justice Warren Burger came to visit the European Court, one of the institutions of the European Community. Daniel Boorstin, who was then the Librarian of Congress, came to meetings with the European Parliamentarians. I cite this as evidence that the Washington firmament tended to see these EC institutions as important and felt we should make the gestures designed to keep the U.S.-EC dialogue fruitful and important.

Q: You left there in Summer of 1979, where to?

KIRBY: I came back on leave and had a little bit of training here, and then at the end of the Summer of 1979 became the Deputy Chief of Mission in Khartoum.

Q: So you were in Khartoum from when to when?

KIRBY: August of 1979-August of 1981.

Q: How did you get the job? This was somewhat out of your bailiwick, wasn't it?

KIRBY: Yes and no. There's a certain logic to it in a way. First of all, I think it had more to do with the old NEA network than anything else. There was a time, long ago of course, when the Sudan was handled out of NEA. More importantly, I thought I wanted to be a DCM and get back to the developing world. I saw that one of the jobs coming open was DCM in the Sudan, and so I applied for it, as did many others. The Ambassador in Khartoum at the time was Donald Bergus, a senior, respected Foreign Service officer who had been our Deputy Chief of Mission in Ankara when I had had the Turkish desk here in Washington. He had been Charg# in Cairo after the 1967 war, and had previously been head of the Egyptian Country Directorate in the mid-1960's. But I had really gotten to know him during our joint Turkish period. When I used to go to Turkey, I would visit with him and so when he saw that I was one of the applicants for the job he very kindly invited me to come out to Khartoum from Brussels and take a look at the place and job to make sure I really wanted to do it. It was a rare and unique opportunity, so I took him up on it. I flew out and saw it visually as a pretty austere place, but I felt that the professional challenge was there and I would like to take it on. In the Winter-Spring of 1979 I had the choice of going to Khartoum or of staying on for a fourth year in Brussels, which I liked very much by the way, far more than I had expected to; I liked the USEC mission enormously. As I said, I had the choice of staying in Brussels or going off to Khartoum. When I opted for Khartoum, as nearly as I remember it, 50% of my colleagues and close friends in Brussels said that I had lost my mind, and the other 50% said that they understood my decision. So with that divided counsel ringing in my ears, I took my family and went off to Khartoum.

Q: In the first place, how did your family react going to one of the hottest climates in the world? It's austere, the climate is very difficult.

KIRBY: Well, let me take the last point first. It was probably in many ways the best time to serve in Khartoum in the last 20-25 years. I'll come to some of the hardships later, but at least we had very good state-to-state relations during that 1979-1981 period. We were at that time busy restoring the bilateral relationship. For wholly understandable reasons, relations between Washington and Khartoum had gone into the deep freeze. We had totally broken relations with the Sudan when the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) killed two of our diplomats in Khartoum in 1973. We thought that Khartoum was partly responsible or at least hadn't vigorously gone after the perpetrators in the aftermath. And so things were pretty frigid in our relations through the end of the 1970's. But starting in about 1978 we began restoring relations and during the 1979-1981 period we expanded our presence there: we created a military attach#'s office, and an office of military cooperation in the embassy. Our economic assistance went from about two million dollars a year to something over 100 million annually. The military assistance relationship, which had been non-existent, went to over 100 million annually. And President Nimeiri in 1979, very courageously, was the only Arab ruler to support Sadat's signing of the Camp David Accords and suffered in his relationships with the rest of the Arab world because of that. And also, when things went badly in Iran, Nimeiri was openly condemnatory of Khomeini and the Mullahs. Thus, relations were very good between Khartoum and Washington. It was not a period of high personal risk for Americans serving there. So, in that respect, it was a good time to be in Khartoum.

But, when my family first heard about it, what was their reaction? They didn't quite know what they were getting into. My wife was eager to go. The children were young. I think our son, who was then nine, was excited by the idea of going to what he considered to be far off Africa. Our daughter, I think, viewed it with mixed emotions, because she was 14, and this move would entail her being placed in school in England during our years

in the Sudan, with her visiting us on holiday periods. Just to fast forward, let me say that as it turned out, the family liked it enormously. I'd never had any reason to doubt that I was part of a real Foreign Service family, but it really was gratifying nonetheless to see their reactions. In the summer, or spring, I guess of 1981, when I learned that I would be coming back to go to the Senior Seminar here in Washington, my family, all three members, were disappointed. They asked whether I could ask Washington to request a third year in the Sudan. This is amazing in a way because it was a very austere life. Even though at a political level and in terms of personal security there were no problems, we were in an environment where living was hard. There was the extreme heat, which you referred to, electric outages which could go on for 14 days at one period (thank goodness we had generators by that time, but they were loud, noisy and smelly). It was very hard to put a meal on the table. There just wasn't very much food available. There was plenty of good beef available and Nile perch, but that was about it. The market rarely had many vegetables or salads. So, there was a certain sameness to the food day after day. Putting a representational function together when we were having people in, really took some ingenuity; you really had to scramble to get enough food. As in so many things, I take my hat off to my wife in that regard. So, it was a very austere environment, but there was something special, a bit of the frontier spirit. There we lived at the confluence of the Blue and White Nile. Going across the old city and out to the edge of Omdurman to the camel market and the camel races on Friday, or going off into the desert to see the pyramids at Meroe, or 300 miles across the desert to see some animals in a primitive game park—in all this you had a real sense of adventure. Altogether, it was a very good life, and we loved it.

Q: During the 1979-1981 period that you were there was Nimeiri the President the whole time?

KIRBY: Nimeiri was President the whole time and still in pretty good shape. The threat from the Islamic fundamentalists was not then as palpable as it later became. He still had his own personal stability and balance. He was, in general, in control of things. We had

very good access to him, so it was a government with which you could maintain a good dialogue on issues that mattered. And, we had a lot of issues that mattered. In the Middle East and North Africa, we were able to work with the Sudanese Government on these in a very sensible and constructive way. It was a surprisingly good working environment at the time.

Q: You were there during the whole period of our difficulty with Iran, when they seized the Embassy. Here you had a government that when the PLO had taken over and killed our Ambassador and DCM Cleo Noel and Curt Moore, had been not a very helpful entity. I mean the Sudanese eventually got the killers out (of the country) and hadn't done really very much to help. And yet here is this Islamic fundamentalist takeover, albeit Shiite, of our embassy in Tehran and yet they seemed to have taken a course somewhat different than most of the other Arab countries.

KIRBY: That was a very bad autumn all together—the autumn of 1979. You've mentioned the takeover of our facilities and our people in Iran. One Sunday up in Libya that fall they tried to burn our Embassy down, and over in Pakistan they did burn the Embassy and a couple of people got killed. It was a tough time all through the area. The Fundamentalists were underground in the Sudan and a somewhat inchoate group at that time. Nimeiri believed that his and the Sudan's security interests rested in having a good, responsible, constructive relationship with Egypt. So that's why against all the sentiment of the Arab world, he was prepared to back Sadat in his opening toward Israel and peace with Israel. The history of Sudanese domestic politics suggests that there has always been a party that allegedly got part of its political, spiritual and cultural guidance from Egypt, with another group getting its inspiration from other sources, including the Koran directly at times. But Nimeiri, at least during that period—later he was to change—in effect threw in his lot with Egypt. Having brokered the Middle East Peace Process and the Camp David Accord, the U.S. was certainly at pains to nudge him forward to stick with Sadat. Sudan is surrounded by a lot of unlovely neighbors. Unlovely, not as people or in terrain, but in many of their actions, maybe unlovely in their leadership, at least at that time. I

think the Sudan is touched by at least eight different countries. As neighbors, Nimeiri had Qadhafi, he had Chad—things going badly in Chad—Idi Amin, with things doing badly in Uganda, and Mengistu in Ethiopia. Also, problem-ridden Zaire touches the Sudan. So, in Nimeiri's place, one looks for zones and measures of stability and I think that's what he did. Anyway, he decided that what he thought the Mullahs stood for in Iran, and what Qadhafi seemed to stand for in another vein, was not what the Sudan needed. We were at pains to encourage that sentiment, as was Sadat in Egypt. This is why Nimeiri was the only one of the Arab leaders to support us on the Camp David Accords and was virtually ostracized at Arab League gatherings for some time after that.

Q: I take it that you mentioned the growth of our military assistance and our aid assistance, this was all really tied to this, wasn't it?

KIRBY: Yes, it was. This was the early stage of our restoring relations with the Sudan which came after the many political shocks of 1979 which we mentioned above. Finally, with the Soviets going into Afghanistan in December of that year, this whole area was the cockpit of Brzezinski's Arc of Crisis. Some of our current arrangements in the Middle East military and otherwise, were then just getting started or were just a glimmer in someone's planning. We were thinking about possible needs for the future, e.g., pre-positioning of equipment. While I don't think we contracted for any specific real estate or use rights with the Sudanese in my time, nonetheless as we thought about the Red Sea and the Port of Sudan, we wanted to be sure this big country to the south of Egypt was inclining in a generally favorable direction. And thus, we had a surprisingly large number of Congressional leaders come to the Sudan. A large delegation from the House Armed Services Committee came twice, partly because they liked to travel, I think, but also to get to know Sudanese officials. Frank Carlucci at that time was Deputy Secretary (later Secretary) of Defense, came for talks with the Sudanese. In general, we were trying to move them into a position which, as we elaborated our presence in the Middle East, would be compatible with U.S. interests.

Q: What was our view of Qadhafi during this time? He was messing around in Chad at that time, wasn't he? He was certainly making things as difficult as he could for Sadat and for Nimeiri. How did we view him?

KIRBY: I think that all through that period he was viewed with alarm and was seen as a force for instability in the region. I can remember that from the U.S. popular press to the discussions we had with other governments, the notion of somehow finding a way to isolate Qadhafi and keep him in a box, was very much in play. Although I don't have details, I think that feeling of dismay about Qadhafi and the sense of wanting to see his claws clipped intensified after the Reagan administration came to power. I think that in 1981 you began to see attempts to tighten the screws. But, for whatever reasons, he's still there, in Libya, although not much heard from these days.

Q: What was the reaction to...in the first place...did we have much intelligence about what Qadhafi was doing while you were there?

KIRBY: I don't know that we had a lot of specific intelligence, I don't remember that we did. We certainly knew that, in his discussions with other Arab leaders, he was running down Nimeiri, that he had a mischievous hand in Chad and that some of that war was overlapping into the Sudan. And then, I've forgotten what occasioned it frankly, but there was the idiotic episode during my time in the Sudan when Qadhafi sent a plane in on a bombing run to drop a couple of bombs someplace in the Sudan. That didn't do any damage but that was seen as a gesture of his dislike of Nimeiri and the Sudan. So it was clear that there was tension, but it wasn't at the boiling point.

Q: As we were giving military aid was this sort of looking toward giving them some way to respond...?

KIRBY: Partly, if need be. That if out on the Western borders, Qadhafi began to stir dissonance among the tribes, this would help the Sudanese fend him off.

Q: What about the Soviet takeover or attempt to take over Afghanistan in December 1979. This was part of the new Brezhnev doctrine. This was the first time they were basically expanding their empire or whatever you want to call it. Did that have any repercussions in terms of the Sudanese?

KIRBY: In terms of Nimeiri and company, yes. I think the Sudanese government at the time saw it as confirmatory of what they, we, and others thought was going on in the world. That is that the Soviets and their friends were stirring the pot, seeking targets of opportunity and doing what they could to de-stabilize unwary governments.

Q: What about Israel? How did we view...I'm talking about you and the group there. I mean this was an Arab post and although you weren't an Arab hand, Don Bergus was and others were. How was Israel viewed at that time?

KIRBY: Well, we all supported the peace process. Bergus certainly did. Out of his earlier Egyptian experience, he had a high regard for Sadat. I, like many others, had been stunned and even exhilarated, sitting in Brussels one Sunday afternoon in the late 1970's watching Sadat on TV on his sudden trip to Israel, going in to address the Knesset and so on. So, I think we all felt, at least at Embassy Khartoum, that things were moving in the right direction. There were many other problems remaining between the Arabs and the Israelis, but at least for the first time since the creation of the State of Israel and all the turmoil that had followed that in terms of Israeli-Arab tensions, at last maybe it was possible to negotiate, to make new land arrangements, etc. So, we were generally very supportive and talked along those lines to the Sudanese and to our other diplomatic colleagues.

Q: Did you find easy access to the government of the Sudan?

KIRBY: It was extremely easy. Successively we had as Ambassador Don Bergus, and he was followed by Bill Kontos, both excellent Ambassadors. There was a hiatus of three

or four months after Bergus' departure and before Kontos' arrival when I was charg#, but I also had very good access to Nimeiri during my period as charg#. I could get in to see Nimeiri anytime I needed to, and I needed to fairly frequently. Similarly with the two Vice Presidents (there were two Vice Presidents in their system). As DCM, I called regularly on the Foreign Minister and on the Vice Presidents. The two Ambassadors obviously had very easy access. In terms of working relationships, it was a very good time to be in the Sudan.

Q: A little nuts and bolts. You say you would call on Nimeiri. What types of things would you call on him for?

KIRBY: There were many issues on which I went to see him—e.g., to get his read-out on Arab summits he attended. Perhaps I can describe the most dramatic matter which I discussed with him. I suggested earlier that he and Ethiopia's Mengistu were very suspicious of each other. Mengistu and his gang of senior Ethiopian government leaders came over to Khartoum on a state visit in 1980 or 1981. This was part of a new effort to relax relations between the two countries. He came over with a lot of “hoopla” for a two or three day visit. In the middle of the night I received a message from Washington saying the Department may well be giving me a “mission impossible” but that they wanted me to try very hard to carry it out. My instruction said by way of background that the U.S. had intelligence that Mengistu was planning to attack Somalia as soon as he returned home from the Sudan. The telegram stated that Mengistu's military arrangements were already in place and that the U.S. had absolutely no doubt whatever about plans to attack. This was over the Ogaden. The instruction was for me to try my very best to see Nimeiri personally and ask him to tell Mengistu that this was a “no go,” and that there would be serious consequences if he attacked. I was also instructed to try to get Nimeiri to put the matter to Mengistu in context of Mengistu's attempts to improve relationships with the Sudan. Mengistu was already in town and I thought that getting to Nimeiri directly at that time might be impossible. But I called the Minister to the Presidency and I said, “This is an unusual time, but I have some extraordinarily hot instructions from Washington and I need to see your boss. However, I am perfectly willing to tell you what it is about.” He said,

“OK, come over to the Presidential Palace. Security is incredibly tight but come over—tell me what car you will be in, and I'll make sure you get in.” So, I went in to see the Minister in question. I didn't lay the whole thing out in detail, but I said here's what this is about, and my instructions are to see the President; I'd really like to do it. Washington insists that I do it.” He said, “On something like that, I think you should too...don't go away.” He went up and interrupted a Nimeiri-Mengistu conversation by whispering in Nimeiri's ear. Nimeiri allegedly whispered back, “Well, hold on to the American charg#, give him coffee or something, and when there's a break in these proceedings I'll see him.” This was highly classified at the time, but I guess I can talk about it now.

In any case, when there was a break in his talks, Nimeiri received me and said, “I'd like you to give me Washington's instruction to you verbatim. What did they say? So they say the intelligence is compelling?” And I said, “Yes, Mr. President, it is compelling...he has the arrangements in place to do it.” So he said, “Well, alright, when he and I resume very shortly, I will raise this first thing and here's what I'd like you to report back to Washington...I'm going to tell him it is a silly thing to do...all the reasons why he shouldn't do it but specifically, I'm going to emphasize that the whole purpose of these meetings here in Khartoum will be undercut...this effort to ameliorate relations between us. I will take it as an act of bad faith if he comes here to talk about peace in the region and then does this. I intend to know that, and one way or another, I will confirm to you what I said and of his response.” I said, “Thank you very much. We feel it is urgent. Washington wouldn't have asked me to come here if we didn't think this were terribly and fundamentally important.” He indicated that he accepted that. All of this occurred in the late morning. When I arrived at the Presidential Palace with my wife that night for the State dinner that Nimeiri was giving for his Ethiopian guests, waiting at the door was the Minister of Presidential Affairs, who signaled me and asked me to follow him. The Minister and I went into a little ante-room, and he said, “You'll get a chance to shake hands with the two Presidents again tonight, but you may not have an opportunity for conversation so the President instructed me to tell you the following.” I took out my notebook so he would

know that I was taking it down exactly as he spoke it. The Minister indicated that Nimeiri had said that he wanted me to tell Washington that he had raised the Somalia matter very directly with Mengistu in the words that he had used with me that morning...that he had used verbatim what he had said to me that morning and that he had come down very heavily on Mengistu that an attack on Somalia following his Khartoum visit would be a very serious set-back between Sudan and Ethiopia. This was a time when Mengistu and Nimeiri were supporting dissidents in each other's country, so both had something to gain from a stand-down. But Nimeiri, in using the phrase, “This will be a further set-back to our relations”, in effect used a bargaining chip in his hands. Nimeiri had the Minister tell me that at the end of his recitation, Mengistu looked at him a long moment and said, “I understand, but Mr. President, I have absolutely no intention of attacking Somalia.” Who knows precisely what the cause and effect relationships were in this episode, in the end. We thought our intelligence was accurate. The fact of the matter is, when Mengistu went home, we did notice that some of the troop dispositions were relaxed on the Ogaden front, and the attack did not take place. Again, while I don't know what the full cause and effect relationships were, I had a feeling at the time that we contributed importantly to a stand-down there. In any case, that was probably the most dramatic thing I had to take up with Nimeiri.

Q: What about internally in the Sudan? One knows about the North-South conflict basically the Muslim north and the Christian and animist south, the more Arabic North and the more black south. What was happening during the time you were there?

KIRBY: Mercifully and happily, it was a period of stand-down, a peaceful period. The civil war was over, we all thought. Nimeiri had during the civil conflict, been the general in charge of the northern troops and had worked out a deal with the south. It seemed to be working. One could travel in the south, as we did. Sudan had two Vice Presidents from north and south Sudan, and there were prominent southerners in various senior government positions. Nimeiri was sort of the “lynch-pin”. The southerners had a phrase they used when they talked about him. They said that he had been—this is not quite

verbatim but it will give you the spirit—he had been a hard foe but a generous peace-maker, something of that sort. He was the one northerner they trusted. They didn't see him as an Islamic fundamentalist or as a hard-line Arab, if you will. And he didn't conduct himself as a hard-line Arab vis-a-vis the south. It was a period of calm on that front. The domestic political tensions, such as they were, though they were not extreme at that time, had more to do with the traditional tensions between the major northern political opponents, which I referred to obliquely earlier, the two major political groupings in the north. But the Islamists and the hard-line Arabs were not in a sufficiently strong position to do anything negative toward the south, and the military was quiescent at that time.

Q: Political reporting...we all want to know how things are going. The Sudan is a huge country but it sort of gets lost because so much of it is untouched, but how do you politically report on an area such as the south? It's important to know what's happening there, but I think it would just be very difficult to get to the right people and to places, the whole thing.

KIRBY: You've used the key word...difficult. I was going to say with difficulty and with no assurance that you're getting the full story. There was the occasional trip by somebody from the Embassy, but travel is difficult in the Sudan, even when things are normal. Distances are very great and transport is uncertain. When you get down to Juba, the southern capital, your access to other major southern towns like Wau and what have you is limited. And so you made an occasional visit, you talk to the occasional travelers or people coming up to Khartoum. It is an uncertain art but you do it to the extent you can and in the best way you can.

Q: You are reporting on what? Do you rely on people coming up—aid workers, other people who are working in these areas?

KIRBY: There were many foreigners working on projects in southern Sudan. But the other thing I would say is that while we did the normal amount of political reporting out of the

Sudan, it was not a great flood of reporting. Domestic politics was fairly quiescent during that period. And while this is not wholly true now, what was especially salient politically at that time was happening mostly in the north and you could sort of get at it. But, the Sudanese are fairly closed people. While they are generous with their hospitality toward foreigners, they are very inward looking and close-mouth in their politics. There's not a lot of politics out floating around publicly. There was never a free press where you'd read a lot of things. But by talking to professors at the University, by talking to people in the government administration who had families in various parts of the country, you could put the mosaic together. It would give you a reasonable picture.

Q: Did you have much contact with the...I'm not sure quite what the term was, the Islamists or the Fundamentalists?

KIRBY: Yes. Although the Fundamentalists were not rampant, they were still an important force and I myself had very ready access to and a very good relationship with the one who even then was considered to be Godfather of Sudan's Fundamentalists, Hassan Al-Turabi. Half way through my period there, when the Fundamentalists were getting a little stronger, there was an attempt made by the government to coopt him; he was made Minister of Justice. I could call on him at any time I wanted to and I often ran into him at representational functions. There was one other Minister of that same political persuasion, the Minister of Labor or Civil Service or something of that sort...I had very good access to him as well. But these guys, they always spoke with “two voices”, just as Hassan Al-Turabi does today, in my view. Hassan Al-Turabi is Oxford educated, he knows what a Westerner wants to hear. So it's always the benign side of what his group is for that he is articulating to you. You know, they claim they wouldn't do anything to harm anybody, but behind the scenes they do some very different, very scary things. But we had good access to them at that level at that time.

Q: Did you notice any change in how we dealt with them when the Reagan Administration came in? Were you there long enough to have a feel for it?

KIRBY: Well, I was there only until August of 1981, only seven months into the Reagan Administration. But, no there was no change visible in the Sudan because Nimeiri was still very much in power, still very much in charge of things. As I said earlier, we believed in maintaining good relations with all shades of opinion and so it was in our interest to talk to people like Hassan Al-Turabi. There were no strictures put on the Embassy's ability to maintain that kind of informal dialogue with those whom we thought were prominent in the Fundamentalists movement in the Sudan. And in the Sudanese context, I would say in the first months of the Reagan Administration, there was no visible change. Now when Nimeiri began to slip and the Fundamentalists began to come on more strongly a couple of years later, it may be that our attitudes and how we talked to these people changed, but I wasn't there at the time so I don't really know.

Q: Before we go to the Senior Seminar, was there any other thing we should cover?

KIRBY: I don't think so. Those were two good years in the Sudan—two interesting years in an always turbulent area.

Q: You were in the Senior Seminar from 1981-1982. Right now we are speaking in 1995, the Senior Seminar is under considerable fire in that we're trying to cut out things and it is one of the programs that we're looking at cutting. Its been the State Department's equivalent to the Senior War College assignment. What did you get out of it and how do you evaluate it, from your experience?

KIRBY: I thought it was an excellent academic year. I enjoyed it. I'm going to say two contradictory things, but I think they are both right. I cannot say that my career would have been very different if I had not had the Senior Seminar. In terms of patterns of assignments and how I conducted myself and so on, that is point number one. But, point number two, despite what I've just said, I think that somehow the Seminar made me a better Foreign Service officer, a better representative of the U.S., a more thoughtful human being...yes, I think it probably did. I believe that education and training are incremental,

just as life itself is. If you're alive and alert every day, you take away something from each experience. I think a valuable thing about the Seminar was certainly the extensive travel in the United States that exposed us to so many sides of American life and to American opinion makers. That was a great strength of the program. Another strength of the program was just the ability to sit around here in Washington in seminar rooms here at FSI, or in their own offices, and to be able to spend a morning or afternoon with movers and shakers in our government or our press. All of this was exhilarating and I think very beneficial. Thirdly—and it's very hard to quantify this and I won't even try—it provided time for each of us Seminarians to catch our breath, to read some books we wouldn't have had time to read otherwise, to take some walks and have some talks that we wouldn't have had time to take otherwise. The research projects we engaged in were also useful. Again, could I have gone without it? Sure. Was I better off and probably a better Foreign Service officer for having had the experience? I probably was.

Q: Where did you serve after this, so we have it on tape?

KIRBY: When I left the Seminar, I became Country Director for Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

Q: Today is the 5th of December 1995. You were Office Director for Bangladesh...or what was it called?

KIRBY: It was called Country Director, Office of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh Affairs.

Q: Can you give me the dates, so I can put them at the beginning.

KIRBY: From July of 1982 to April of 1984, I was Country Director for Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. And during about 25% of that time, when Howie Schaffer, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asia, was on leave or official travel out of Washington, I was Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for South Asia, which also

embraces, in addition to the countries I was directly responsible for, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka and Bhutan. I was frequently involved with those countries as well.

Q: What was the situation in first, Afghanistan and then Pakistan in 1982?

KIRBY: Well, I'll start by saying that all during the time that I was in that office, our two main preoccupations were: 1) to persist in the struggle against the Soviets in Afghanistan, i.e., to try to get the Soviets out of Afghanistan, and 2) to try to restore the very close bilateral relations between the United States and Pakistan, which had obtained previously, i.e., up until about 1971-1972, the time of the Indo-Pak War over Bangladesh. As I mentioned in one of our earlier interviews, although U.S. relations with Pakistan didn't deteriorate as dramatically as did our relations with India following the Indo-Pak War of 1971, still our relations with Pakistan also declined. This occurred, first because the Pakistanis believed that we did not support them as wholeheartedly as we might have done in the Indo-Pak War, and second, because the Paks were in some period of internal, domestic political uncertainty and turmoil as they tried to work out new political arrangements. When I came in, in 1982, our main preoccupation was, as I said, trying to dislodge the Soviets from Afghanistan, by using diplomacy and other means...

Q: The Soviets had gone in, in December 1979.

KIRBY: Yes. And so I think it is fair to say that 1980-1981 saw the United States, and others, looking for a way to try to dislodge the Soviets by diplomatic and other means as available and necessary. And very close U.S. relations with Pakistan was actually key to that, given the geography of the area. In 1980 we began trying to improve relations with Pakistan partly because we thought that was a good thing to do overall for stability in South Asia and to help Pakistan develop economically, but basically to try to do something about the war in Afghanistan.

Q: The Reagan Administration was fairly new, it had been in about a year when you arrived. Did you have a feeling of strong policy towards the situation in Afghanistan? You'd

obviously been on the sidelines but sort of following this...I mean you were an Indo-Pak man, anyway did you feel that there was a firmer hand at the tiller for this particular area at this point?

KIRBY: Well, I saw when I came in during the summer of 1982 was that there was a strong U.S. commitment to assisting the process that would end up by getting the Soviets out of Afghanistan. I think the Reagan Administration was fully committed to that. Indeed, in the early stages of the Soviet move into Afghanistan, the last year of the Carter Administration, with the shock that came to the Carter Administration as a result of the Soviets going in, the Carter Administration itself was committed to getting the Soviets out, I think. This was also a part of Brzezinski's “Arc of Crisis” that we talked about earlier in these interviews. So, I think the Carter people, too, saw the Soviets going in as a “wake up call” and were determined to do what the U.S. could to dislodge them. But, sure, I think that when the Reagan Administration came in, they probably turned it up a notch. But, the commitment was quite clear.

Q: So that in your heart of hearts, looking at that thing. In 1982, what did you think? Did you think that we could do it without an overt attack ourselves, did you think the Soviets would be able to stay on there and persevere? What did you think?

KIRBY: I felt very strongly that the Soviets had to get out, and that we should do what we could to assist that process. I felt that from 1979 on. My personal, very uneasy feeling even before I went into the job, however, was that given the geography, and given the over-whelming preponderance of military power of the Soviets, it would be very difficult to get them out. On the other hand, and that's the sort of mind-set I took in with me, the other side of the coin was that, even recognizing the technology of the 20th century and that it was a new era and so forth, it was important to recall that historically that no foreign invader had ever been able to keep the Afghans down. That's an aspect of the dictates of geography too, as you know. Afghanistan is a terribly mountainous place and, indeed, early on it was evident that the Afghans, the various tribes, were not going to take the

Soviet invasion lightly. So I came in thinking that it would be very, very difficult to dislodge the Soviets, but that it was worth the effort, that in the fullness of time it might well be possible to get them out. Nothing is pleasant about an inherently unpleasant situation, but I think one of the “pleasant” surprises during my first months, was to see how badly the Soviets were doing militarily. And in that early stage, 1982-1983, one began to think the Soviets were clearly not going to have it their way, and that if the pressure were kept on them, eventually they would have to leave.

Q: I assume there must have been a mutual looking at this thing. But particularly from our military people, after all we had come out of Vietnam and had an idea of the limits of the possibilities of what an army could do. What were you getting from the Pentagon as sort of an evaluation of how the Soviets were dealing with this?

KIRBY: Although I don't have a clear memory at this remove of all the specifics, I think that the reports that were coming to us from all the agencies around town, suggested that the Afghans, while obviously taking a number of “hammer blows” from the Soviets, were resilient and amazingly committed to getting the Soviets out, and that despite the vaunted Soviet fire-power and use of elite troops and so on, they were not doing as well as the “arm chair strategists” had thought they would. That this was all the more an argument for helping to keep the pressure on. My memory of the attitude of DOD and other USG agencies at the time was that Afghanistan was a worthy cause and that we should certainly assist. I don't think there was any unanimity on what the outcome was going to be or what the date of that outcome would be. But as time went on there seemed to be more and more reason to think that if the Afghans were going to stay the course, then all their friends in the world, from Pakistan to Saudi Arabia to Egypt to the United States and others in the Western world should stay the course too.

Q: What sort of representation did we have in Afghanistan, if any?

KIRBY: My memory is a little dim on that although it shouldn't be. I think the Embassy had closed at that time, but I don't remember. I would have to research that. If it was not closed by that time, it was certainly a beleaguered garrison. On reflection, I think we maintained a few people in Kabul throughout, but they weren't able to get outside the Embassy compound very much or get around Afghanistan at all. And for policy reasons the Embassy had no real contact with the Babrak Karmal Government which was in power when I came in, because we saw it as a Soviet imposition. But I think we stayed on at a middle grade, Charg# d'affaires level.

Q: What about in Pakistan? Let's deal with the Afghan War first, then go to internal things. Were you there when the decision was made to give more sophisticated weapons to the Afghan fighters, the Mujahideen, at all?

KIRBY: There were various kinds of important assistance going to the Mujahideen during my time, to be sure. The Mujahideen obviously always wanted more and more sophisticated equipment. As the Soviets began to improve their tactics, i.e., from the Soviet point of view—using helicopter gun-ships and so on, the Mujahideen and the Pakistanis, who were in liaison with the Mujahideen began making strongly the case for providing the hand-held Stinger missiles to bring the gun-ships down. The final decision to provide the Stingers in quantity was not made during my period as Country Director although the debate was going forward during that time.

Q: Where did the Pakistan desk fit in the debate about more sophisticated arms to Pakistan and into Afghanistan?

KIRBY: The Country Directorate didn't control that discussion, but we were certainly involved in it. We had a voice and could make recommendations on anything and all things relating to Afghanistan, but decisions on that set of issues were taken at a very high level. And, obviously there were a number of agencies making recommendations at that time. We were, from the Department's point of view, very much in the loop, however.

Q: Did you at all feel that this was more the CIA war than the State Department war, in a way?

KIRBY: Not in policy terms, I did not think so. It seemed to me that there was pretty good inter-agency coordination on the Afghanistan effort. I think that, by and large, the State Department took and maintained a strong policy lead. The NEA Bureau, which is where the Country Directorate is located, chaired a number of inter-agency committees which had to do with the war. Assistant Secretary of State, Nick Veliotes, and later Dick Murphy, chaired inter-agency sessions at their level. I chaired an inter-agency committee at the Country Directorate level which met very regularly to talk about policy and to make recommendations on policy. I think the State Department played the lead role in the policy discussions. The 7th floor and the White House were very interested in Afghanistan, so you had first, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, and then you had Secretary Shultz, who were very interested in this. You had strong people in State, and I think State played its role very effectively.

Q: Did you find yourself trying to explain the Afghan society, the clan system, to upper levels and all to explain that while there might be a certain (Afghan) unity against the Soviets, they fight among themselves too?

KIRBY: I think that was very well understood. We did explain it. INR and the Country Directorate made these points regularly, but, of course, the major explanations about Afghanistan's ethnic and religious make-up had already been made at the very early stages of the Afghan War, before I came along. Yes, I think our government understood very well that about the only thing that most of the Afghans could agree on was that they wanted the Soviets out, but that there was by no means any political unanimity among them beyond that. The group of Afghan political leaders that the Pakistanis dealt with, and that we occasionally dealt with, I've now forgotten what the name of the coordinating group was, but it was comprised of 6 or 7 Afghan factional leaders—it was always quite clear from their internal debates and from what they said to us that there was no unanimity

among them on anything. They were all “jockeying for position”, all trying not only to get the Soviets out, as I said, but to position themselves for a leadership role following the Soviet withdrawal if it ever came. Our consulate in Peshawar maintained contact with those people, and we also saw them here. Rabbani and the others would come to Washington occasionally, and I would usually accompany them to see people on the 6th and 7th floors of the State Department. So, yes, our top officials had a chance to see pretty much directly at first hand the “fissures” among the Mujahideen political leaders.

Q: Did you find yourself having to say or make the point that we should really do a certain amount of “fine tuning” about this or otherwise we might end up with a strong Fundamentalist group which we were already having terrible problems with in Iran, we might sort of “out of the frying pan and into the fire” type of thing. Was this a concern, an analysis of where are we going?

KIRBY: It was of concern, and we did address it. It was a theme that figured in our policy analyses and meetings but it was not a first priority issue, not the biggest item on the agenda. At a time of crisis, you have to set your priorities and get first things first...the top priority was to get rid of the Soviets. We chaffed and worried about the issue, but it became more prominent at some stage down the line later in the middle 1980's, after I left the Country Directorate, when you began to see light at the end of the tunnel in terms of likely Soviet withdrawal. At that time I think concern about the Fundamentalists became a more prominent theme. There seemed to be a tendency on the part of some Pakistani officers in liaison with the Mujahideen to funnel equipment especially to the more radical and more Fundamentalist Afghan elements. This is something that, I'm told, figured in discussions between our people and the Pakistanis at various times along the way. My sense of it is, that this became a more prominent issue after we made the decision to supply Stingers, i.e., after my time at the Country Directorate. It then became a rather prominent issue for us to discuss with the Pakistanis “sotto voce”. By definition, the Pakistanis were on the ground and in a way they held the “whip hand”, it was thus hard for even our liaison people to control the flow of weapons entirely. But I think this is something

that our people were concerned about but didn't quite know how to handle, although I wasn't privy to the discussions that might have occurred on this...say from the spring of 1984 on.

Q: Turning to Pakistan. What was the situation in Pakistan?

KIRBY: Well, the situation was that you had essentially a government over which the Pakistani military exerted strong influence. It wasn't a military government per se, but President Zia Ul-Haq, who had replaced Bhutto, was very much in charge of things, and the major appointments were people who had come from the military. And Zia and his government were committed to doing what they could to assist the Mujahideen to prosecute the war in Afghanistan. The Pakistanis and the U.S. shared the strategic perception that it would be detrimental to South Asia's stability to permit the Soviets to remain in Afghanistan. The Pakistani belief was that if the Soviets were able to ensconce themselves comfortable in Afghanistan in force, then that would over time put unbearable pressure on Pakistan. And, who knows, one day the Soviets might be emboldened to go into Pakistan. I always thought the latter point might be a bit exaggerated, but nonetheless, I think the Pakistanis took it very seriously.

Q: You had a military dictatorship and you also had a...Pakistan which was playing the key role in helping force the Soviets out. Was it very definitely a feeling that we're not going to over-push democracy in Pakistan in this period?

KIRBY: That's a good question. There was an inherent intellectual tension in the U.S. position towards Pakistan. We wanted Pakistan to develop toward coherent democracy, but we needed them to help solve an immediate regional strategic problem. I don't mean to imply that it was a tension that broke out visibly or audibly in our relations with them, though perhaps at some stage it did. Yes, we saw Pakistan as the key to a successful outcome, without a doubt, in Afghanistan. Successful outcome defined as getting rid of the Soviets, getting them back into the Soviet Union. Pakistan was the key. That was an

important priority concern of ours. We felt strongly therefore that we would have to improve our bilateral relations with Pakistan if we were going to work effectively together on the Afghan issue. But, there were problems, as we perceived U.S.-Pakistan relations. You mentioned democratization. I think we pretty much concluded that while we should be able to continue to talk to them about democracy and the importance of moving toward real democracy, we should not browbeat them in the public square at high noon every day on the issue. But we should continue to talk about it. In some ways at that moment —I'm not saying that these were inherently more or less important than democracy—but the two issues that really threatened the warming of relations at that time, and right on through the 1980's, were, above all (1) the question of whether Pakistan was trying to develop nuclear weapons and (2) the opium poppy issue and the heroin coming into the United States either directly from Pakistan or from Afghanistan through Pakistan. So, our other important policy goals, while improving the bilateral relationship and working together effectively on Afghanistan, were to persuade them (a) not to go nuclear, and (b) to do something, either with our assistance or on their own, however they could do it, to control the hard drug traffic coming out of and through Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province. These were issues that engaged us regularly...every time we had bilateral discussions at any level, including the Presidential level and the Secretary of State level, these two issues figured very significantly. We always talked, to be sure, about the Afghan war but we also talked about these other two issues right up front and center. And, as I said earlier, these two issues were to continue to over-shadow the relationship right on through the 1980's. Democracy also remained an ongoing concern and was another issue that figured in discussions, but somewhat less prominently.

Q: How did we see the nuclear issue developing? By this time the Indians had obviously nuclear capabilities.

KIRBY: The Indians exploded their first device in 1974. The belief was that they were continuing to work on devices, but did not have a full-scale weapons production program. Our concern was that Pakistan was trying to match them. And indeed, there was

intelligence that Pakistani procurement around the world pointed in the direction of a desire to develop a nuclear capability. We tried to use whatever diplomatic, economic assistance or other muscle was available to blunt that—to try to persuade them they didn't need a nuclear capacity and that any tendency for India and Pakistan to develop a nuclear arms race would be absolutely disastrous for both countries. That latter line is something that we believed profoundly then and now, and we spent a lot of diplomatic effort, including, as I said earlier, at the Presidential level on that.

Q: What about the drug situation? Did we see collusion within the government with the drug producers or who were with the military?

KIRBY: I don't know, but I don't think that at that time we concluded definitely that there was high level collusion between the government or military and the opium poppy/heroin interests. What we did know was that it was evident that despite their good words, for both political and security reasons, the Pakistani government was reluctant to move directly and forcefully against tribal leaders who had managed this trade for a very long time. We're talking about remote parts of Pakistan, where, by and large, the Pakistani government's writ nominally ran, but only up to a point. They didn't totally control everything that happened in every ravine and every valley. There are some pretty inaccessible areas up there in the Northwest and to go in and clean it out would have taken a major military/police commitment which might have run beyond their ability to do it. We thought they could do more, but we also recognized the inherent problem. Pakistani leaders worried about political stability in the region, and were concerned that if they roiled the tribes too much, they might have more on their hands than they could handle. But we kept pressing them.

Q: Did we have a strong Drug Enforcement Agency presence there?

KIRBY: Did we have a DEA presence in the embassy in 1982? I don't remember specifically, but I'm going to say that I think we must have had a representative or two.

Q: But it was not a...I mean we weren't out flying helicopters or spraying crops and that sort of thing?

KIRBY: No, we weren't doing that sort of thing. But we were trying to address the problem in other ways. You see, one of the quids for the quo of Pakistan helping the Mujahideen prosecute the war in Afghanistan, was that we would restore a large measure of economic and military assistance to Pakistan, and we tried to build into the economic assistance part of it a component that would reward them for doing more on the drug front. No, we weren't involved operationally, Central or South American style, I don't believe. I'd like to put just a little flesh on those earlier words when I said that drug and nuclear issues were taken up with Pakistan at very high levels. For example, when Zia Ul-Haq, the Pakistani President, came to the U.S. for a State visit in December 1982—he arrived on December 7, 1982, had dinner at the White House and talks with President Reagan and other senior officials on that day—the drug issue was on the menu—not the dinner menu, but the bilateral discussion menu. Of course, Afghanistan and the nuclear issue were also on the agenda. But the need to control drugs and our interest in that and in encouraging the Pakistanis to do what they could on that front was taken up. Similarly, when I had the pleasure of accompanying Secretary of State Shultz on official visits to India and Pakistan in June-July 1983, the talks at the Ministerial level in Islamabad included a long session on drugs. It was a very, very serious discussion.

Q: What was your impression of the Pakistan Foreign Ministry and of its Embassy here at home?

KIRBY: As in all things we discuss, I don't mean to be goody-goody in my response. Over the years I've known a lot of Pakistani diplomats and have had considerable contact with the Pakistani Foreign Office. So, long before I went to the Country Director's job, I had formed a very strong impression of their high competence and expertise. The Pakistani Foreign Minister at that time was a very accomplished man, Yacub Khan, who had been an army general at one time. In the first stages of the rebellion in East

Pakistan in 1971, he was the Pakistani commanding general in that sector. But, he was pulled out of East Pakistan and yanked back to West Pakistan and more or less put under house surveillance for the remainder of the turbulence and the subsequent Indo-Pak war, because Islamabad had found that he hadn't cracked down strongly enough in East Bengal. He had apparently been reluctant to use the troops against the population. Anyway, we were discussing 1982-84, when he was Foreign Minister. He is a very distinguished man. He had been Ambassador in Washington, I think in the late 1970's and also in Paris. While Secretary Shultz can, of course, speak for himself, and I suppose he has done so in his memoirs, I had the impression that he found his discussions with Yacub very beneficial; I sat in on many of those conversations and they always certainly were at a very high level. But the Foreign Office, too, was well structured throughout with people knowing their dossiers well, I thought. Pakistan's Washington Embassy was headed by a courtly former army general, and he and the Foreign Service officers in his Embassy did a very competent job.

Q: During this 1982-1984 period, was there concern that India and Pakistan might go at each other again, or did this Afghanistan sort of push that off the plate?

KIRBY: I don't think there was a high level of concern about that at that time. I don't remember our being concerned about that. Certainly what we all knew, anyone exposed to South Asian affairs or who had a background in South Asian affairs, was that there was no love lost between India and Pakistan. They had already had three wars and we all felt that part of our diplomacy was that at the first warning sign to try to ensure there wasn't a fourth one. But I don't think there were any major pointers toward renewed conflict during that period.

Q: Did you get any feeling from Washington of sort of a difference of clientitis or something between the officers who were taking care of India and you were taking care of Pakistan? Sometimes this happens.

KIRBY: It does happen sometimes, but I can happily say that during that period there was no such feeling at all. My office was on one side of a wall in the State Department. The Country Director for India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, who was a good friend of mine, sat on the other side of the wall. That was Victor Tomseth. Victor was a very able Country Director. His only real prior association with South Asia at that point had been that he had been a Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal. And so he didn't bring a lot of India-Pakistan baggage. However, he brought good judgment and common sense to the job, and he had a lot of people on his staff who had served in India and some who had served in Nepal. I thought it was a very, very collegial atmosphere; there were no sharp edges between my office and his during that period at all.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover on this particular period before we move on?

KIRBY: I don't think anything major. I mentioned Zia Ul-Haq's (Pakistan's President) State visit here. By the way, maybe I might say one word about that. It was an important visit in that it was supposed to symbolize the full restoration of close, friendly U.S.-Pakistan relations. You asked a very good question earlier about whether I thought State played much of a role in policy formulation on Afghanistan and I said, “Yes, I thought State was playing the lead policy role.” State did take the lead in this whole set of inter-related, inter-locking Pakistan issues, even though the Department of Defense and other agencies had strong interests in Pakistani affairs. We really did play a key role, and I can give you a specific example of that. I was blessed, I must say, in that Country Directorate, by having superb officers working with me. They really were first-class...I mean there was a wide range of age and experience, but they were uniformly good, dedicated officers, who meshed very, very well with each other. When we began thinking, scoping out, if you will, the Zia visit, we sat down together in the Country Directorate and I said, if we put this together the right way, we will have a major impact on the visit. I said these are tricky issues: Pakistan's nuclear research; control of the drug traffic out of, and through Pakistan; U.S.-Pakistan cooperation in Afghanistan. I talked about the tension in our relations and

some of the apparent contradictions and I said that we had to remember that our goal was to have the President, the Secretary of State, and ourselves “singing from the same sheet of music,” and if we do this the right way, our principals would follow the script we wrote. But it had to be done the right way. And we did write a very good script for the visit. You know, Stu, how much paper work there is in getting a State visit together, right down to writing talking points for everything under the sun, both large and small, that might come up during the visit. The speeches were relatively easy to write—toasts, they just took time. What we really bore down hard on though, what we really wanted to get right was the policy papers for discussions in the Oval Office, the Cabinet Rooms, and the State Department. The big question was how to play this restoration of relations with Pakistan in a way that would strike a reasonable balance of interests: the nature and scope of U.S. economic and military assistance to Pakistan, doing things right together in Afghanistan and at the same time keeping Pakistan from going nuclear and persuading them to do some things we wanted done on the drug control front.

I remember the office gang had worked very, very hard, extremely hard, and we had gotten all of our papers in by the deadline, which was about 10 days or perhaps a week before Zia was due to arrive. My Deputy was there in the office with me about 6:00 on Saturday afternoon the day we concluded our work. We had “put it all to bed” as it were since our “book” on the Zia visit had now been submitted to the 7th floor. I was flipping the dial on my safe, and I asked, “How do you feel...exhausted? And he said, “No, I feel pretty good about it but how do you feel, boss?” And I said, “I feel just fine. I'm surprised at how well I think we've done, unless I've missed something.” And I said, “There's no way we can control it now, but if the big guys will just follow the script we've written, we'll be alright.” Obviously, our senior leaders were very intelligent people and they could have done their own script. However, during the visit itself, it appeared that senior U.S. officials wholly followed the scenario our office had devised. I sat in some of the meetings during the visit, of course, but I didn't sit in all of them. The President and Secretary of State were sometimes alone with the two principals from the other side, but from what we heard in

meetings as we were taking notes and from what we got from people who had sat in the White House meetings like the NEA Assistant Secretary of State, it seemed clear that all hands followed the script we had written from A to Z. It was remarkable the extent to which they did. I know this sounds a little self-serving, but we were given kudos from the top levels of our government for the script we had put together. It was a very tricky time, and the issues, the stakes, were very large. And I think this was a case where, as in so many other areas over the years, the State Department showed what it could really do in taking the policy lead and driving the policy process.

Q: What about with Ronald Reagan? Was there any concern...he was notorious for being a very genial person but not being terribly well informed. That was a reputation. Was there any concern about this?

KIRBY: I don't know whether there was outright concern. Let me just say it slightly differently. There was a desire on all sides that the President, while playing the genial host with the Pakistanis, which we knew that he would and should do, must find a way to say the things that really needed to be said to his guests on the issues of central concern, i.e., Pakistan's nuclear program and control of drugs. We were particularly concerned about the nuclear issue. We wanted the President to say something on the nuclear question so that the other side would know that the senior levels of our government did take this matter very seriously, as seriously as the rest of our bureaucracy had been telling the Pakistanis. This was my overwhelming question when people came back from key discussions at the White House in which I did not participate...I participated in some other events at the White House, but I was not in that presidential discussion. And, a senior State Department official who knew, came to me and said, “Before you ask, the answer is that he did raise the nuclear issue.” I said, “Did he really for sure, honest to God?” And he said, “Yes, the President expressed himself on that subject and his interlocutor responded to him.” We hadn't been concerned that somehow the President wouldn't understand the issue or would forget it completely, neither one of those eventualities was in the cards. We had wanted to try to ensure that the President's essential geniality, not so overlay or dilute this

issue that the other man could go away saying that the problem was not as serious as lower level U.S. officials had been telling the Pakistanis. So, we had been at some pains within the bureaucracy to try to get people positioned around the President to ensure that he was very well briefed on the issue. I was informed immediately after their meeting that he had taken it up very directly with Zia. Which was all we could have expected.

Q: Should we move on?

KIRBY: Let me say one word on Bangladesh. It was a country that has always been important to me for reasons we discussed earlier relating to its emergence as an independent country and so on. We haven't said a single word here about Bangladesh. That almost implies that we weren't giving any thought to that country in NEA/PAB during 1982-84. In fact, however, we spent a fair amount of time on Bangladesh during that period. Most of our effort was to encourage a return to democratic practices and to do what we could to assist their economic development. There was a sizeable economic assistance program. And there was quite a lot of contact at high levels during that period, certainly up to and including the Foreign Minister level. We had frequent contacts with their Embassy here. Bangladesh had a very senior man as Ambassador, Rashid Humayun Choudhury, a good friend of mine. I spent a lot of time with that Embassy and went out to Bangladesh on a couple of occasions during that period. That was a very active dossier because we were trying to help this still very new country get itself established, even though it was then undergoing a period of rule by a military man, General Ershad. We had correct relations with the Bangladesh government, relations which continued to develop satisfactorily despite the autocratic character of the Bangladesh regime.

Q: How were they doing?

KIRBY: All things considered, not badly. There were enormous economic problems because of the huge population, and the country often racked by natural disasters—tidal waves, hurricanes and what have you. But they were coming along and, although

imperfectly, were still making some occasional small feints toward a restoration of democracy. And so we felt then, and now, that this new country, despite many strikes against it, was moving along toward the point where it could in time, play an international role. There have always been in the American government a strong feeling for Bangladesh. You know it's a story that goes back to the way they emerged into independence and so on. The State Department and the White House under successive administrations have always wanted to do what they could to help Bangladesh along economically and politically, and I think that has been a successful policy.

Q: Speaking of Bangladesh, you had this peculiar situation where you had a Republican Administration and it was Ronald Reagan who came from the more right end of the spectrum and one of the "Articles of Faith" opposition to abortion and you had a large population in Bangladesh that was sort of the albatross around their neck. What was the birth-control issue there?

KIRBY: I don't think it figured strongly in our relations with Bangladesh. Certainly there are other ways of arranging birth control other than through abortion. I think the people in the Administration who worried about abortion kept their focus on China where that issue got linked up with other issues. I don't remember it being much of a factor in the case of Bangladesh. In our economic assistance programs, we certainly had a program of rural health and hygiene for women. One aspect of that was advice on how you can control the size of your family, and I think we quietly went about that without any great challenge.

Q: You mentioned China. Pakistan was sort of the key to our opening of China in the early 1970's. Was China an important factor at this point or what sort of factor was it in our relations with Pakistan?

KIRBY: Well, I don't think that China was a major factor in our relations with Pakistan. China was a factor only in the sense that it was one of many countries that were determined to see the Soviets leave Afghanistan. While China didn't give as much materiel

support to the Mujahideen as some other governments did, philosophically in the UN, and elsewhere, the Chinese were making common cause with all those countries which were determined to get the Soviets out of Afghanistan. So in a way there was a compatibility in our respective policies toward Pakistan but I don't think China figured as a big issue as we calibrated U.S. relations with Pakistan.

Q: Were we using Pakistan as a thermometer to find out what was happening in Iran at the time? Because we hadn't had relations since the take-over of our embassy in 1979?

KIRBY: A very good question. I don't know about using them as a thermometer but certainly we were always attentive and interested in what Pakistan had to say about Iran. The Pakistanis, for their own reasons, were trying to improve their own relations with Iran. Part of that had to do with the struggle in Afghanistan because the Iranians were a factor in that struggle. I remember that Yahya Khan, the Pakistani Foreign Minister, made a visit or two to Tehran. Later I sat in on meetings where Secretary Shultz held discussions with Yahya across a broad range of issues, including Iran. My memory of it is that Yahya—I don't know whether he shared everything—talked to us about his impressions of what was going on in Iran. As I recall our saying (in effect) to the Pakistanis, “We Americans have on-going problems with Iran. Keep your eyes open and keep your powder dry, but we understand and have no objection to your maintaining your relations with Iran, and we hope that if you have insights that will generally be useful, you will share them with us.” That was the tenor of discussions on it.

Q: Well Harmon, where did you go in 1984 after you left the Country Directorate?

KIRBY: In April of 1984 I went to Rabat, Morocco. I was there from April of 1984 to June of 1987.

Q: Who was the Ambassador when you got there?

KIRBY: It was Joseph Verner Reed, Jr., who, as it turned out, was in his last year there. During the 13 months that we worked together, he was at post altogether exactly half that time. So, by definition, half the time I was Charg# d'affaires. Then he left in May of 1985 and along in August or September, his successor, Thomas Nassif, came out to Rabat. Nassif had been Deputy Chief of Protocol at the State Department. Reed would go to the UN for several years and then later would become President Bush's Chief of Protocol in the Bush Administration. Both Reed and Nassif were political appointees, of course.

Q: Talk about Reed...his relations with King Hassan and also his relations with the Department of State. Because he was to put it kindly, a controversial figure. I mean one of those people who kind of stood out, at least I heard about him although I never dealt with the man.

KIRBY: I don't know what you've heard. I think Mr. Reed went out as Ambassador in 1981, and, as I said, was there until mid-1985. I went in April of 1984, so I saw him only during his later period in Rabat. I'll take your questions in order. First, I think his relations with the Moroccans were clearly excellent. He had very good relations with King Hassan and as nearly as I could tell, with Prime Minister Karim-Lamrani and other senior people in the Moroccan Government. Of course, Reed moved around a lot. He has a very good feel for, a very good touch for public diplomacy and public affairs. I think his was a fairly high but positive profile in Morocco and that the American presence was prominent and well-regarded during his time. While it is neither here nor there, and doesn't imply anything one way or the other, I might note that while Mr. Reed and I are very different personalities, it was my perception then, and is now, that we worked very well together in Morocco. When he was at post I thought that we meshed satisfactorily and well. During the times he wasn't there, I was in charge of the Embassy. I don't have much knowledge of what the post was like or what Washington or he might have thought about each other prior to April, 1984. I've heard only fragments. There have always been rumors that the shake-down period at the Embassy after he first arrived in Rabat was somewhat unsettled in personnel

terms, and maybe some of that had bounced back to the Department. Perhaps that's what had occasioned the chit-chat. I have no idea what the cause and effect relationships, or considerations, were. But just to complete that thought, certainly by the time I arrived, the Embassy was well set and well established in personnel terms, and I thought it was functioning as a pretty good operation. Although I gave it very direct hands-on direction during my time, I think the Embassy functioned well and I don't think we had any real problems with the Department. Indeed, during that period we often received kudos on our work from the Department of State and Defense.

Q: I'll tell you what I heard. And again, this is from somebody who was sitting in Washington having no direct responsibility and that was that Reed, as had almost every other political ambassador to Morocco, was sort of absorbed by the King where as I had heard stories like...you never quite knew when something would come from Reed where he would say "we" or something like that where he was referring to what the King thought or what the embassy thought. In other words, I suppose one would say the reputation, and again I say just vague rumors was that he succumbed to "localitis" which was sort of a speciality of King Hassan, II. I'd like you to comment on this.

KIRBY: I'll comment to the extent that my knowledgeability permits me to. Clearly, Mr. Reed liked Morocco very much, but then we all did. I'd like to come back to that in a minute. If the things that you say you've heard occurred, I think they must have occurred largely before I arrived. I didn't see any great evidence of that during my time. I saw an Ambassador who was clearly fond of the place but I didn't sense that...well first of all, during the time I was there, the Ambassador did not dictate to me or others what we should put into our analysis or our cables to Washington. Again, this was the end of his period as Ambassador and I don't know what had gone on earlier. I was the one who authorized the transmission of all telegrams on substantive matters to Washington and I never did find him second guessing me on those. I tried to ensure that we did keep U.S.

interests uppermost and called the shots as we saw them. I never had any real problem with him on that.

Q: This may have been heard incorrectly.

KIRBY: The thing I wanted to add is that Morocco is a very seductive place. It is a delightful country for anyone who is interested in history, colorful countryside, tribal life and what have you. It's just a wonderful place. My wife and I had always felt we would like to serve there and fell in love with it immediately. This will sound like an aside, but it makes the essential point. Francoise and I have often said that we were among the happy few in that we had not run out of steam when we went to Morocco. We had been in the Foreign Service together a very long time, but we had not reached a plateau of the "blahs". But if we had reached such a plateau, if we had needed something to recharge our energies and cause us to renew our first love with the Foreign Service—that first experience in India of the sights, sounds, and colors—had we needed that, Morocco would have given us that further jump start, I think. That is because it is a fun place, there is enough real work to keep people at the Embassy busy and there were major substantive issues...to be resolved. The U.S. and Morocco have an important bilateral relationship, a fact which is sometimes overlooked. So there was enough to justify our presence. But then in terms of things that make life agreeable on earth, e.g., local dances and wedding feasts, and hospitable people—it's a nice place to live. Part of the struggle is to remind yourself everyday what it is you represent...the government and people of the United States of America in order to maintain balance and objectivity. As I said, I'm not in a position to judge or comment on events that might have occurred before my time in Morocco. In any case, Mr. Reed is certainly a 100% red, white and blue American and I'm sure that he felt that all his activities in Morocco were undertaken in the broader U.S. interest.

Q: What were the major developments and concerns when you got to Morocco?

KIRBY: I think the major developments and concerns related to maintaining, and strengthening the historic U.S.-Moroccan bilateral relationship. We believed that a stable Morocco is one of the keys to a stable North Africa. North Africa isn't very stable, and you thus want to build on what pillars there are. In some ways, this is more important for the Europeans than for us, since North Africa is their back-yard, it's just across the Mediterranean. But this also had implications for the United States. In an uncertain world, we wanted to be sure we maintained good relations and an ongoing dialogue with Morocco about our strategic concerns, including transit needs to East Africa and the Middle East should the need arise, not quite knowing what was going to happen in the Middle East, we wanted Morocco to remain open-ended on a range of issues relating to political and strategic matters. While I was there we negotiated an expansion of our Voice of America transmitter station in the Tangier area. Similarly, we negotiated emergency landing rights for our space shuttle in Morocco, to be invoked as necessary.

In some ways, one of the most dramatic negative developments in my time, which overshadowed our bilateral relations right through the mid-80's, was the dramatic, unheralded, somewhat unexpected announcement in August, 1984, that King Hassan and Libya's Qadhafi had met at a border town near the Algerian-Moroccan border and signed a merger agreement. You remember, ever since Qadhafi came to power, he's had brief merger agreements with several Arabic countries, although none of these mergers ever came to anything. At a time when the Reagan Administration was already looking for ways to put the screws to Qadhafi, the Morocco-Libya merger hit Washington like a bomb-shell. I was Charg# d'affaires at the time of the announcement, and I took it very, very seriously. Even before I received instructions from Washington, I raised unholy hell with the top levels of the Moroccan government. I told them the merger was going to play very bad in Washington, that there were very rocky times ahead in the bilateral relationship, and that they had brought it upon themselves. But I also said in a cable to Washington, that while the Embassy didn't want to minimize the symbolic importance of the “merger,” and took the announcement as badly as Washington would do, our relations

with Morocco were important and we should keep the merger in perspective because I was profoundly convinced that “there is far less to this merger than meets the eye”. People around the State Department circuit quoted that for a very long time since that indeed turned out to be the case: the Moroccan-Libyan merger never had any practical effects, and was relatively short-lived. Hassan undertook the “merger” for reasons of temporary expediency—i.e., to take Qadhafi out of the Polisario equation in the Western Sahara, at a time when Morocco was girding up for the next round in the Western Sahara with the Polisario, supported by Algeria. Morocco wanted to take Qadhafi himself away from further support for the Polisario. That was how King Hassan saw it. The U.S., however, saw the merger in high symbolic terms. I think Washington's reaction was very understandable. We saw it as giving aid and comfort—even if only symbolic—to our enemy at a time when asSecretary of State Shultz said, we were trying to put Qadhafi in his box and keep him there. This overshadowed U.S.-Moroccan relations for a very long time. But if I may say one further word about it...The Prime Minister and other senior government officials were not witting until Hassan put them on a train and took them to the border for the meeting with Qadhafi. Many of them were privately against the move, but it's a place where the King's word is law. So, upon the senior officials return to Rabat, I immediately asked to see the Prime Minister. I told him first of all, just how badly this merger was going to play in Washington. The Prime Minister seemingly played devil's advocate and said, in effect, “It's not as bad as that. Mr. Charg# d'affaires, don't make a mountain out of a molehill. I'm glad to see you...let's have a cup of coffee, things aren't that bad.” My response was, “Mr. Prime Minister, all hell's going to break loose in our relations in about 24 hours.” What happened after that was very, very interesting, and I've appreciated it to this day. Without telling me what they were doing, the Prime Minister and his inner team apparently decided this was very serious and should be explained further. Without warning I got a telephone call exactly 24 hours later from the Prime Minister's top political assistant saying, “Can you come over and see the Prime Minister? He wants to see you right now.” “That's funny”, I said to the man on the phone, “Is this not when you have your normal weekly cabinet meeting?” He paused and said, “He just wants to see you right now.” So I went over and

was astonished to be paraded in before the full Cabinet. The Prime Minister looked across with a very saturnine countenance and said, “I've already told the Cabinet that you were in to tell me some exaggerated things yesterday, and I'd like to see, Mr. Minister, if you feel as strongly about them today as you did yesterday. I think you ought to tell them too. They ought to see if it's serious or not.” I immediately got the message that he had taken it seriously and was giving me a rare opportunity to make the U.S. case to the whole Cabinet. It was a pretty risky thing for him to do, in a way.

Q: Because this was the initiative of the King.

KIRBY: Yes, it was. And so I played my role, and said, “Mr. Prime Minister, it's even worse than I thought. I had an opportunity to be in direct contact with Washington since yesterday. I've received some cables and talked to some people on the phone, and you really have brought something down on your head that shouldn't happen to our bilateral relations, which have been strong and enduring.” etc. I went on for some time, sensing that there were a number of people in that room who wanted to hear that. I knew most of those Ministers and many wanted to hear what the U.S. really thought. The Prime Minister then, as he had to, went through his drill with me again. He said his message, and he thought the whole Cabinet's message for me, to convey to Washington was that the U.S. should not take the Libyan mergers too seriously...that there wasn't as much to it as we might think. And while they could understand U.S. chagrin, we should please remember that Morocco was a good and faithful friend of the U.S., etc. So we were all playing our expected roles. But it was gutsy for the Prime Minister to do it, very, very gutsy. When I left the Cabinet room, Moroccan television was there to see me emerge and the Prime Minister showing me to the door. That night the state-run television reported that the American Charg#, on Washington's instructions, had expressed concerns about the merger with Libya and that the Prime Minister had reassured the Americans that Morocco continued to take its relations with the United States very, very seriously. It was a very dramatic time. The top aide to the Prime Minister told me subsequently that following my representations to the Prime Minister the first day, he had consulted his associates,

and thought it useful for all sides to give me an opportunity to explain to the Moroccan government why the U.S. government took the “merger” so seriously. The Prime Minister's aide noted privately that the Moroccans placed great value on their relations with the United States.

Q: Let's talk about this. He probably discussed it with the King.

KIRBY: And, the King must have told him to go ahead and do that, i.e., have me meet with the Moroccan Cabinet.

Q: There have been a series of so-called “mergers”. The biggest one, the last was called the “United-Arab Republic” between Egypt and Syria...were all together, all one nation. This was going on again and again all through this whole area with absolutely one result —that they lasted a very short time. After the collapse of the United Arab Republic, I don't think anybody has taken it very seriously.

KIRBY: Nobody in Morocco took the merger very seriously. Of course, they had a view they wanted to put across, but the Moroccans are very sophisticated people and, public and diplomatic relations aside, they instinctively understood what a hollow shell this merger would turn out to be. Privately, the civil servants, and the people in business, shrugged it off the day it was signed, the merger would have no content. They noted that the King didn't like Qadhafi personally, he was not his type of man, not his type of Muslim. They noted that the move was related to their struggle in the Western Sahara, and suggested that even if it only temporarily took Libya out of supplying arms to the Polisario, it was still a good thing. They continued that, Qadhafi, and with Morocco's interests being very different from Libya's, the merger: a) would not last long and b) would not mean very much. And, so, they understood it for what it was. And that is what it was. Analytically, it was clear at the time that the merger was designed to divide Libya from the Polisario, that it wouldn't last long, and that it wouldn't be very important. But still, given what the U.S.

was trying to do in the world, it was predictable, and understandable, that we would react negatively to the announced merger.

Q: While you were there, when did this happen?

KIRBY: This happened August-mid August 1984.

Q: This happened pretty early on during the time you were there. Had we already bombed Qadhafi or did that happen later on?

KIRBY: No, I think that would happen in the spring of 1986.

Q: So, in the time you were there we had shot down some Libyan planes, and at one point because of a bombing in Berlin that Qadhafi's hands were tied to we had bombed Qadhafi's headquarters?

KIRBY: All of that happened while I was in Morocco, but sometime after the Morocco-Libya merger we have been discussing. If memory serves, our retaliation against Libya because of the Berlin bombing incident, came in April, 1986.

Q: But anyway, Qadhafi was, after the Soviets, number one on our blacklist.

KIRBY: Yes. We had publicly said this. Although I don't know if there was anything behind them, there were rumors in the early 1980's of Qadhafi sending hit men to Washington, and we were also angry at Libya because of other Qadhafi policies and actions. One way or another we had indicated publically several times that Qadhafi was high on our public enemies list. That was well known. And that was the reason for the intense U.S. chagrin in seeing Morocco, one of our oldest friends, seemingly line up with an enemy like Qadhafi. The whole matter was more symbolic than real. But, in politics—international politics—symbolism and imagery are extremely important.

Q: What were you getting from Washington when this happened?

KIRBY: That it was going to be taken very seriously and it would be a set-back in our relations with Moroccans. Washington made representations here to the Moroccan Ambassador and instructed me to make further representations in Rabat.

Q: Did it have any long term consequences?

KIRBY: The merger itself did not really have any great consequences. I've forgotten all the details, but the two sides set up a little Secretariat and there was a building housing offices of the merged entity in downtown Rabat...a very modest building. I've forgotten now what the name of the merged entity was...but this was its local headquarters. And they were to have periodic meetings and they did send people back and forth between the two countries but it didn't lead to anything, so it really had no effective follow-up or substantive life. As I noted earlier, the fact of the merger did cast something of a pall on U.S.-Moroccan relations for the next 2-3 years, although our two countries maintained generally useful relations throughout that period.

Q: The Polisario movement which was over some desert territory, the old Spanish Sahara, was sort of a constant theme for some years. What was the situation during the time you were there with the Polisario?

KIRBY: There was some active fighting during the time I was there. The Moroccans had marched into the Western Sahara during the Peaceful-Green March of 1975. Nine years later when I arrived in 1984, at various times, and usually without warning, there were some fairly sharp engagements when the Polisario would come in and attack the Moroccan army which held the berms, which constituted the Moroccans' defensive perimeter. The Polisario was able to inflict some sharp casualties on the Moroccans. I don't want to overplay it, but there were some fairly substantial losses on a couple of occasions during my time in Morocco. And, it (the conflict with the Polisario in the Western Sahara) was very much a matter of public cognizance, if you will, in Morocco. It was often in the news, with declarations from the King that Morocco was in the Western Sahara to

stay. That's where most of the Moroccan military was stationed—almost all the Moroccan military was packed down in the Western Sahara. Moroccan civilian administrators and Moroccan citizens were encouraged, and given special perks, to settle in the Western Sahara. The Moroccans were busy building cities and infrastructure in the region all through that period.

Q: At one time, the Polisario movement had much the same status as the Biafra Civil War, in other words in the United States it had attracted liberals and all and even in Congress you had people...I think it was because it was against the King...

KIRBY: Yes, such people often supported the Polisario politically as a gesture against King Hassan, whom they considered to be an autocrat.

Q: Had this pretty well, as I call it, the support of the left which might not be quite the right term...It's more the liberals, still held sway in the United States at this time?

KIRBY: There was still some small pro-Polisario sentiment in the U.S. at that time, but it wasn't a front and center issue. I think American intellectual and political circles were seized with so many other issues at that time that the Polisario cause was not a major concern. But, it was still an issue for a few...oh, Congressional staffers and the like.

Q: I was going to say it seems like the type of thing that a staff member of a key Senator or Representative would take as his or her thing and push.

KIRBY: There were a couple of staffers who didn't care much for Hassan's Morocco and who felt the Polisario should be given a chance to pursue their national aspirations. But although this element existed, it was never sufficiently strong to control policy in Washington. You'd get a Congressional hearing or two, or an occasional published article, but it would never control politics or policy. Most of the public and Congressional focus in the U.S. on the Polisario, however, occurred before I went to Morocco.

Q: You have some Congress people coming up with staff making visits?

KIRBY: We had an enormous number of visits to Morocco proper both from the Executive Branch and the Congress. Morocco has always had a lot of visitors from Washington, in good times and bad, partly because it's such an agreeable country to visit. Interestingly, although we had large Congressional delegations visit, my memory is that we didn't have any visitors zeroing in specifically on the Polisario question during my time. I think I remember that before I went there there were a couple staffers who went out and felt very strongly about the Western Sahara. More recently, as the UN has been trying to broker a referendum, I have read an article or two in the Washington Post on that issue, and I think there have been staff members who have gone there within the last year or two. But during our time, Congress was not very much focusing on the Western Sahara and the Polisario.

Q: Did we have any policy on the Polisario situation?

KIRBY: Our policy line from the beginning, and its been a fairly steady one, is that we recognize Morocco's de facto but not de jure control, and that the Western Sahara's final status should be determined through an acceptable early UN referendum. And that is sort of where we still are today. King Hassan had agreed to a referendum. The issue now, today, as it was 10 years ago when I was in Morocco, is who's to be allowed to vote. The Polisario believes that the old Spanish population list should be the one applicable. That would tend to favor them and their progeny. But Hassan says, “Yes, but you have to allow everybody who has moved in over the years, including the Moroccans who have gone down to settle there.” And that's been the sticking point, and that's why the UN hasn't been able to go forward with its referendum. It's a question of voter lists. Yesterday the Washington Post suggested that in this time of budgetary stringencies, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary General, who knows that he can't keep a UN presence there forever (and they have been there for several years now, at a cost of about 5 million dollars a month), could just cut through it and go on and have a referendum and get it over

with. The article said that. Now whether or not the Secretary General has indicated that he is leaning in that direction, I don't know. Thus, the issue is still there.

Q: You had, after Reed left, another Ambassador who came, Thomas Nassif. What was his background and how did he operate?

KIRBY: Mr. Nassif was a lawyer from California. He had been, I understand, active in the Republican party organizations in whatever part of California he lived in and then sometime after the Reagan Administration came in, came to Washington and took a job as Deputy Chief of Protocol, where he was very active. I think, from everything I heard, that he did a good job. I ran into him when I was Country Director for Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan during the Zia Ul-Haq state visit that we referred to earlier in these interviews. At that time I had quite a lot to do with Mr. Nassif and his Chief of Protocol, Selwa Roosevelt. We worked closely together. It was as Deputy Chief of Protocol that he visited Morocco. I think he also visited Morocco on holiday while Mr. Reed was there. It was at about that time that we heard that he was going to replace Mr. Reed.

Q: How long did you work with him?

KIRBY: Let's see...about 2 years. My memory of it is that he arrived in August or September of 1985, and I left in June of 1987.

Q: How did you find him as far as his work in Morocco?

KIRBY: Well, he was an agreeable man. I think he got along well with the Moroccans. Perhaps he didn't move in as many circles as his predecessor had done. He seemed to like Morocco and the Moroccans. He may have been more interested in sports and the countryside than in his work. I don't know if that judgment is valid, but it struck some people, both Moroccans and Americans, that way at the time.

Q: Was there any other situations while he was there?

KIRBY: I think that during the nearly 2 years we were together the bilateral U.S.-Moroccan relationship went forward all right. Mr. Nassif's incumbency was not a negative factor, as I said. He had correct relations with the Moroccans. We were still operating under that shadow I mentioned earlier, the 1984 Moroccan merger with Libya. There was a certain coldness in Washington's reaction to everything that happened in that period. But still, Administration visitors came to Morocco, people in Congress came. They came to lecture the King on Qadhafi a bit if you will. Deputy Secretary of State Whitehead came out. He had a very good meeting with King Hassan and talked about the Libyan matter. He also talked about more positive U.S.-Moroccan matters. Bilateral relations were “OK”, but both sides recognized we were experiencing a bit of a pause in our relations, although not a deep trough or anything like that. King Hassan wanted additional U.S. military and economic assistance for Morocco, but it was clear that that wouldn't be on for a while, not until the U.S. saw how they worked out their merger with Libya. But, relations went on all right.

Q: You had three years there?

KIRBY: Yes, a little more than 3 years there.

Q: What was your estimate, at that stage in his career, of King Hassan as a person, as a leader?

KIRBY: I had and have great respect for King Hassan and his adroitness, his suppleness, and his staying power. It's important to recall that within weeks following his accession to the throne in 1961, there were many observers—many well placed Moroccans and reasonably well placed foreign diplomats from various countries—who were predicting that the King wouldn't last more than a year or two at best. In March of this year he celebrated the 34th anniversary of his accession to the throne.

Q: Hassan and King Hussein of Jordan are the two great survivors despite the famous "Garden Party" of Hassan. I can't remember when that was. There was a garden party—his birthday or something—and an assassination attempt.

KIRBY: There were two serious assassination attempts from within his own entourage in the early 1970's. One came at a garden party celebrating his birthday at the beach palace at Skhirat and the other attempt—I've forgotten which came first—occurred when his plane was coming back from abroad and one of his own Air Force planes tried to shoot him down. My impression was, and is, that the King is very intelligent and politically skillful. He has wide-ranging interests and is interesting to talk to on a variety of subjects...literature, Islam, Christianity, architecture, history, politics, international affairs. He is well read and well-traveled. As noted, he is politically shrewd and adroit...not just in domestic political terms, but obviously with respect to the Mid-East and North African politics. His staying power hasn't been an accident, I think. He is a very able man. I'm not passing judgment here on how he governs the country; I recognize that there is a wide range of views on that issue. But he is certainly an interesting man who has great dexterity and mental agility.

Q: You left there in 1987? This might be a good place to stop. Where did you go?

KIRBY: I came back to Washington and then in September of that year became the Director for United Nations Political Affairs in the State Department's Bureau of International Organization Affairs.

Q: Today is the 22nd of January 1996. Harmon, let's start. This United Nations job. Could you explain what your job was and what the IO Bureau was like at the time? And you were there from when to when?

KIRBY: I was in IO from September of 1987 to September of 1989. Two full years. It was a good Bureau, doing important work. With respect to your question about what it was like, it was a period of transition in a way, since organizationally it was experiencing some

problems at the time. About the time that I went in, Alan Keys, who had been the Assistant Secretary of State for IO Affairs, had just resigned. We had an interim period when one of his erstwhile deputies, a Deputy Assistant Secretary, was designated Acting Assistant Secretary. And I filled in behind him that Autumn as Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Political Affairs. Then along some time in the New Year we got a new Assistant Secretary, Rich Williamson, who stayed about a year and then another new Assistant Secretary, John Bolton came in around the Spring of 1989, I think. They were all able people, but the repeated changes created a certain amount of effervescence at that time.

Q: This was at the end of the Reagan Administration. It was also the Reagan Administration, at least early on, had not been too friendly towards the United Nations. I wonder if you could pick up the attitude at the time you were there and also what had gone on before and also could you talk about Keys because Keys is now running for President...a very minor figure...but there were mixed emotions about Keys in his job and what were...obviously people were talking about Keys when you got there and what were you getting?

KIRBY: I came in late in the summer of 1987, and actually, I was very cordially received by Alan Keys, who was still Assistant Secretary when he interviewed me for the IO/UNP job. Sometime, I would guess this to be mid to late August, he interviewed me for the job. I had been recommended, I think, by various people, including the Director General of the Foreign Service. And so Alan and I had a conversation, and at the end of the conversation he said that he wanted to talk with his senior associates, but he thought that probably that was a job that I would be suited for. And then about three or four days later I heard I was being assigned to the job, and very shortly after that I heard that Mr. Keys was resigning. So, I didn't work for him. He went out the door about the day that I came on board. It was very close anyway. Thus, I didn't have any direct experience of working with Alan Keys. Certainly, in our conversation, he proved to be what he had been advertised as being—a

very intelligent, articulate man. After he left, there were a lot of rumors around the Bureau, both pro and con. He had his supporters, ideological and otherwise, and he had his critics.

Q: Was he, I may have the wrong man, but there was somebody in one of those organizations at that time who spent most of the time giving staff meetings which were long, long monologues about...that the Assistant Secretary gave, maybe this was not Keys.

KIRBY: I really don't know because I never sat in one of his staff meetings. He left as I arrived. Whether that was his style, his modus operandi, I don't know.

Q: What were you getting as the attitude toward the United Nations, the U.S. role? I mean this is the end of the Reagan Administration.

KIRBY: I was there at the end of the Reagan Administration and at the beginning of the Bush Administration. I think that in the period that I experienced the Reagan and Bush Administrations were ambivalent at best toward the UN, although President Bush and his team were probably slightly more positive than the Reaganites. I can't compare it with the Administration's approach to the UN and UN affairs when the Reagan Administration first entered office because I was doing other things at that time and not involved. But, I would say that at the end of the Reagan Administration, our government was ambivalent at best. Probably the Administration thought the UN had some good ideas and some bad ideas. One of the sound instincts which the Administration held toward the UN system is still with us today and has, I think, a certain amount of bipartisan support. And that is that the UN really needs to get its administrative and budgetary house in order, that it has been living a little “too fat” and perhaps too inefficiently over time. This theme of the need for reform has been a constant in our policy toward the UN for at least 15 years. That sentiment was certainly prominent at the end of the Reagan Administration. I thought then, and now, that it was desirable to keep the pressure on the UN to reform, although the U.S. could perhaps manage the campaign for reform more adroitly than it has sometimes done. All

the to-ing and fro-ing, and the unwillingness to pay our assessments, which I consider regrettable, all of which are still with us today, began during the 1980's. Of course, some of the pressure came from Capitol Hill rather than from the Administration. I'm not sure the Administration moved as adroitly as it should have on the assessment/arrears question. There was a fair amount of true believing anti-UN sentiment in some quarters in the IO Bureau. I didn't have a feeling, though, that the Secretary of State, George Shultz, and his senior associates at the Under Secretary level were strongly opposed philosophically to the UN in any way, although some of them may have had doubts about its overall efficacity. There were several arenas, and we'll probably talk about some of them, where the senior people in the Department considered it useful to engage the UN, believing that it was in the U.S. interest to do so. However, the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, at that time Mike Armacost, were sometimes skeptical and had to be persuaded, but were nonetheless attentive in various crises along the way, when the IO Bureau or other parts of the building would suggest a UN role, e.g., the Afghan War end-game and for a Persian Gulf monitoring mechanism following the Iran-Iraq War. I would say they were quite attentive to serious suggestions about UN undertakings and, at times, brought on fairly readily.

Q: What were your responsibilities?

KIRBY: I found it a fascinating and very wide-ranging job as Director, UN Political Affairs, and as I said earlier, that first autumn, acting Deputy Secretary for Political Affairs as well. Occasionally thereafter, during my time with the Bureau I was Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary. I headed a large office of about 10-12 people, which was well-staffed and very busy. I might digress to say that, for understandable reasons, the office has, in recent years, been broken in two. One successor office is UN Political Affairs and the other is the Office of Peace-Keeping. I'd like to come back to the peace-keeping function later. We had all of that under one hat when I was there. So it was a very busy office and I would say that there were all sorts of responsibilities, but they fell into two main areas: UN General Assembly issues and activities, and UN Security Council activities. First, I should say as a

general proposition that it was IO/UNP which, working with other relevant Bureaus within the Department of State, would work up U.S. government positions on all political issues coming before the UN General Assembly or the UN Security Council. It was our office in the end, that would transmit to the U.S. Mission in New York voting instructions and position papers if necessary on those political issues. Given the UN calendar—all the year is rather busy now—but given the normal calendar, the autumn months are particularly busy because that is when the General Assembly has its annual session—starting the third week of September and, at least in our time, running up until almost Christmas; I remember in 1987 the General Assembly concluded its work at noon on the day before Christmas. We handled a very wide range of international issues, perhaps more then than now. The Cold War hadn't quite come to an end, and there was a very wide range of political issues that came before the General Assembly. It is always a frantic pace just to keep up with the work and to keep up with things in New York during any autumn period.

So, one thing the office did was to handle the political issues in the General Assembly. The other side of its responsibility is to work up U.S. government positions, discuss them with New York, transmit instructions and so on with respect to anything that comes before the Security Council...from threats to the peace to anything that member governments of the Security Council are sufficiently concerned about to bringing up any time during the year. Frequently, while the General Assembly was in session, we would be running “flat-out” dealing with those issues and at that time there would be a brouhaha in the Security Council on Southern Africa or the Middle East or whatever. So we had to work that set of issues at the same time. Once the General Assembly concludes, you get a little...in normal times maybe a little breather in early January, but given the complexity of the world and the number of crises in the world, there was a lot...there was almost always continuous Security Council activity of one kind or another throughout the year. We had a pretty steady diet all the time. I think the general public thinks of the Security Council only when it is in session, when there is a major real world crisis—the Gulf War, bringing a show of hands on who supports a proposed resolution and who doesn't. But really, behind the

scenes, the Security Council works all the time. All the organs of the UN do. In the press last week, there was a discussion of how Secretary General Boutros-Ghali had recently sent a rather passionate letter to the current Security Council saying approximately: “I gravely fear that genocide may break out in Rwanda again, and soon, if the international community doesn't stir itself to forestall that kind of eventuality. What are we going to do about it?” The Security Council is dealing with that kind of issue behind the scene, day in and day out. Sometimes it comes into public view, and sometimes it doesn't for a while, but they are always busy. So, that means that the back-stoppers here in UN Political Affairs are busy all the time, too.

Q: Did you find yourself acting in your office, as a traffic cop or say the South African Bureau would say we have a problem in South Africa and here's what you do and then you figure how to do it, or would you be initiating things? How did this work?

KIRBY: It can work both ways. There are times when IO/UNP is a traffic cop, a scheduler, and facilitator. There are times when you are an initiator. As I think back, if you can imagine it, it's usually something in between. I mean, certainly, on Southern Africa issues, you would expect the African Bureau to take the lead in broad policy terms just as you would expect it to have the final say on an African policy. You would expect the NEA Bureau to play a similar policy role in a major Arab-Israeli dispute. But the IO role, even in those circumstances, is not just as a traffic cop or assembler and dispatcher to New York of policy papers and voting instructions. It's the IO people who are supposed to anticipate how issues will play in the UN and how its mechanisms can be engaged to further U.S. interests. IO can, and should, explain to other Bureaus its “feel” for how the issues will play out. Illustratively, IO can say: “Here's how we think the deck is stacked and here's what we all should do about this.” Sometimes IO works up the initial position papers. The officers working in UN Political Affairs have to maintain the very closest kind of links of real confidence and trust with their counterparts in the Department's geographic bureaus. In IO/UNP one is always exchanging information, passing ideas, maybe talking to somebody in one of the other Bureaus, perhaps asking him or her to write a paper with you to get the

attention of the Secretary of State and his advisers. I think IO initiates a lot of things itself. On certain issues it acts as paper and position coordinator or traffic cop, sure. But IO has the right and power of policy initiation. Above all, it's IO responsibility to say how things are going to play in the UN, how we can use the UN mechanisms, and how we can get the best out of the situation as seen from the standpoint of the U.S. interests.

Q: Describe a bit your impression of our UN representation.

KIRBY: Stu, when I think about it later, I think sometimes the things I say in these conversations could sound a bit “Pollyanna-ish”. I usually come out being pretty positive about most of the people I have worked with. Actually, I'm not Pollyanna-ish by nature, but I think I've simply had the good luck (we all have) to work with some pretty classy people in my career. It's that kind of outfit. That's a blunt analysis. Now I was very impressed with our representation in New York, the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. First of all, when I first came on the job, General Vernon Walters, “Dick” Walters, of international renown, was our Permanent Representative. He was later replaced by a very, very senior Foreign Service Officer, as you recall, Tom Pickering. I found it a great pleasure to work with both these superb ambassadors and their able associates. It had been a privilege to know both of them as personal friends over the years, well before I came into the IO/UNP job. [Break here to change sides of the tape and it doesn't pick up exactly where left off.]

Q: You were saying that you could get the Perm Reps?

KIRBY: Yes, I often spoke with them and their mission associates on the telephone. And when I had to go up to New York, as I frequently did, entre to the Perm Reps and within the Mission was very easy. Beyond the Perm Reps, the U.S. Mission to the UN historically had been, and was at the time (and I assume is today, although I just haven't checked it out recently) extremely well-staffed. The Deputies to the Perm Reps on the whole were very good. At that level you had both career and political appointees. Down in the ranks, from Counselor or down, the Political Section was very well staffed...great people at every

level. My natural counterpart—the person I talked with on the phone 10 times a day every day, Bob Immerman, and old friend, was top flight. I made a comment earlier about how we really worked hard going flat out in the IO Bureau most of the time. That was certainly true in spades for the people in New York as well. No one has tipped me to say this, but they do earn their keep. It is a very heavy burden. Life in New York, I guess, is fun from time to time, but people at the U.S. Mission have very demanding jobs. The volume of things they deal with is extraordinary.

Q: What were the main issues? Can you take them one by one during the 1987-1989 period that you found yourself most involved with?

KIRBY: Right. All times in UN affairs are fascinating. It was an especially fascinating time. Day in and day out, the bread and butter the things you could count on to occupy a fair amount of your time were Southern Africa issues; Middle East issues, disarmament and other matters where we and the Soviets had, historically, competing interests; the end-game in Afghanistan; and the Iran-Iraq War. With respect to Arab-Israel issues, this period marked the beginning of the Intifada.

Q: Please explain what the Intifada was.

KIRBY: This was when the Palestinians began their violent resistance campaign. What “Intifada” means is “earth quaking” or “earth shaking,” or something like that—I've forgotten the exact translation. That's when they began their campaign—it all began in January of 1988, I think—rock throwing and other types of non-passive resistance to what they saw as the Israeli occupation.

Q: Kids throwing rocks and armed troops were shooting back and it changed world opinion, which is vital, about Israel.

KIRBY: In the end, it affected political events in that part of the world.

Q: It changed many Israelis' attitude toward this.

KIRBY: The deportations of Palestinians which the Israelis undertook as a result of the Intifada helped to change opinion, that's right. Well, all of that began on “my watch”. As you might expect, there was a “hullabaloo” in the Security Council, and Council resolutions were repeatedly voted on.

Q: Let's take each one separately. You know it's been traditional in the United States that we have been a strong supporter of Israel. That the Israeli lobby, predominantly Jewish, but not all Jewish, just friends of Israel, have meant that we have an almost unthinking support of Israel. How did this play out? Because this was different than it had ever been before. As far as pressures on your job and what you were seeing in the “body-politic” of the United States?

KIRBY: That's a good question. In a way it's the kind of question that could usefully be put to people who were in the NEA Bureau and in the Secretary's office at that time, since they bore the real brunt of this. But we in IO got involved in it too...very directly. Against the background of what you've just said, I think there was a strong desire, understandably, in the State Department and White House to continue to be friends with Israel while telling them behind the scenes (to the extent possible), “Hey, you have some very bad problems of perception here. There are some things you can do and some things you can't do and much of what you're doing now looks ugly. From the point of view of Israel's image and the way the world works in the Middle East, it's not doing your image any good.” I can't, without doing some research, which I haven't done, remember the exact sequence of resolutions in the Security Council that I mentioned. On the whole, the U.S., while criticizing Israel privately and even offering language in the Security Council in explanation of our vote ofttimes explaining there were things we did not like about what was going on, nonetheless, by and large, tended to veto those resolutions because, as you would expect, they went beyond the pale...beyond the policy pale from our point of view. Some of the resolutions moved by the Arab States and supporters of the Arab States not only

condemned Israel but had very precise language that was contrary to our policy on long-standing Security Council Resolution 242 and related resolutions. So, in the end, there would usually be something that caused us to veto. My memory of it—and I'd have to check—my memory of it is that in at least one famous case at the time we either let a resolution go through—I don't think we voted for it, but by abstaining on it—which was critical of Israel. That brought a lot of pressure on the White House from certain supporters of Israel, but we explained that we had in effect gone along with the consensus of the international community—that there were certain limits beyond which the U.S. simply couldn't go on Israel's behalf. I don't remember if that was early in the Intifada at the very end of the Reagan Administration. More likely, the incident I'm talking about may have occurred in the new administration...the Bush Administration. There were real pressures, and I understood at the time that the Secretary of State and his people were, as always, getting anguished telephone calls from various quarters asking what the Department and the Administration thought they were doing. Pressure was being applied from both sides of the issue.

Q: What sort of things were you getting on Southern Africa? Could you explain a bit about what you and the American role was in Southern Africa during this particular period of time?

KIRBY: Leaving the UN context aside for just a moment, let me say by way of summary that under the lead of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker, the U.S. had adopted a policy that Crocker described as “constructive engagement” with the government of South Africa on a whole range of issues relating to what is known as the “Southern Cone” countries. This approach was applied not only to issues relating to the domestic policies of South Africa, but above all, to Namibia and Angola as well. And under “Constructive Engagement” our position was that it was better to engage and dialogue with Pretoria than to isolate them and try to ignore the South Africans...that you could get more in the end through steady pressure negotiation, than by isolation. I thought that the concept of “Constructive Engagement” looked morally and pragmatically

defensible at the time. I must say that looking at its results today, it looks even better. We were then involved...very much involved in the “end game” (if there ever is an “end game” in politics) as it turned out, on several fronts in Southern Africa, and in the Southern Cone: moving toward majority rule in South Africa; ending the South African mandate over what was to become an independent Namibia; and winding down Cuban and South African participation in the Angolan civil war. Every year, for years and years, in every General Assembly there had been a whole range of resolutions moved by the African caucus and supported by various other countries in the world, particularly the developing countries, on these issues. Usually two or three of these resolutions would relate to Namibia, to getting South Africa out of Namibia and setting Namibia free, and some would be on Angola. Then there would be resolutions condemning South Africa for its internal policies...apartheid...and calling for democracy. This occurred in every General Assembly even in non-crisis times—i.e., meaning no new crisis superimposed on the long-festering ones. There would in any case still be this range of issues, resolutions, and angry debates on the Southern Africa set of issues. In our work on resolutions and on votes, the U.S. always tried to get angry language dropped out or modified. We always proceeded from our position of “Constructive Engagement” that it was better to negotiate than to isolate. As we dealt with people in the General Assembly or when things got kicked over into the Security Council, we would work with other UN members to try to get them to remove the angry and most tendentious language, and we would call for constructive negotiation. Running parallel to all that, within the General Assembly and the Security Council and outside, in the arena of international public opinion, the thing the UN was particularly engaged in at that time was in trying to bring Namibia to the “end game” and on to independence. This had been a long-standing policy of the UN system and Chet Crocker and the African Bureau were working on this issue very actively and the International Organizations Bureau had gotten very much involved as well.

One of the things that the African Bureau and the IO was very much involved in, in that period, was the negotiations leading to South Africa's withdrawal from Namibia. And IO

took the lead in setting up the UN peacekeeping force in Namibia for the period leading up to Namibia's independence and democratic elections. I mentioned that Chet Crocker led the “constructive engagement” policy during the Reagan Administration. Then with the Bush Administration, the policy of constructive engagement remained pretty much the same when Crocker was replaced as Assistant Secretary by a career officer, Hank Cohen. Incidentally, during the summer of 1989, I had a chance to go down to Namibia and meet with the UN people and see the UN team just as it was settling into place for the elections which would be held later. During that same trip I participated in meetings in Luanda, Angola, and visited the small UN team stationed there.

Q: Looking back on it, I've never been there but Namibia is certainly a pretty desolate place and an awful lot of the tension was concentrated on Namibia. Why Namibia?

KIRBY: You almost have to begin by looking at the other side of the equation—there was no way for us to avoid the Namibian question. Those forces in the world which were determined to see the end of colonialism and the liquidation of what had started out first as a South African protectorate under the League of Nations and, later, a South African protectorate under the UN over what was then called South West Africa (Namibia today), had placed Namibia squarely on the international agenda. The African caucus in the UN had, over a long period, made a very considerable issue of getting South Africa out of Namibia. The UN had become seized with Namibia in a very major way in the late 1970's and 1980's when the UN adopted resolutions and set up a structure designed to lead to Namibia's independence. There was a UN committee which was supposed to oversee that process. Those wanting to end the colonial period, and particularly the UN's African caucus kept the heat on South Africa to grant independence and withdraw from Namibia. This became one of the primary foci of African efforts in the UN, and the U.S. had, early on, declared itself in favor of the UN call for independence. And so it was a logical extension of the position we had taken to work with the international community to try to bring about a peaceful transition, because the concern had always been that it might not be peaceful. There had been insurgent activity in Namibia from SWAPO. We

had always seen it as in our interest, and had argued that it was in South Africa's long-term interest, to see this link between the South African and its protectorate dissolved so that a peaceful Namibia could take its place in the international community. And that's why all the effort was expended on Namibia.

Q: Were there any other places that...?

KIRBY: Yes, I wanted to say a general word about UN peacekeeping and then just tick off some of the individual operations. There has been, of course, a real explosion of UN peacekeeping operations in this decade, in the first half of the 1990's. I don't know what the latest count is...17 or 18 current such UN operations. The first major explosion or proliferation of peacekeeping operations, however, was during the late 1980's, while I was in IO. Just to list them: as part of the “end-game” in Afghanistan, we worked up and installed a UN monitoring group in Afghanistan. I should note that the “end-game” in Afghanistan—getting the Soviets out and trying to bring peace—was a major preoccupation at the State Department in the late 1980's. There was a sizeable UN component to that negotiating effort, and our office was very much engaged in that. The UN played a very substantial role in that. Another major regional crisis which had implications and potential for becoming a world issue, which took a fair amount of time and attention of the international community at that time was the Iran-Iraq War and, particularly, the Persian Gulf dimension of that. The concern from the U.S. side was that somehow we were getting involved in it...that our interests were threatened. I remember that we re-flagged the Kuwait oil ships and provided naval escorts, that there was great to-ing and fro-ing in the Gulf area with exchanges of fire, and that our escort efforts were being threatened with attack by Iranian gunboats; we then went in and undertook some punitive action. All of this had a very strong UN element. Then, to re-use that “end-game” phrase, the United States, among others, was working on trying to bring peace to Iran-Iraq, trying to wind that crisis down by working with the Security Council to devise a peace formula. The Security Council became actively engaged in the search for peace and the Secretary General became engaged in the search for peace between Iran and Iraq.

UN-sponsored negotiations finally entered in train, and part of the end-game was a UN Security Council decision to install a peacekeeping/monitoring force in the Persian Gulf. We were again actively engaged in helping put that force together and getting it installed. Still on the peacekeeping front, while the whole thing didn't come to fruition during the time that I was in IO/UNP, we had a lot of UN activity in the UN, as well as in our regional diplomacy here in this hemisphere, on Central America during that time—the Nicaragua-El Salvador problems. That had a strong UN strand to it. And we began to put together what a UN peacekeeping monitoring group would look like in that part of the world. Later such a force was installed. Cambodia had considerable salience for us at that time, especially in the UN system, although some U.S. bilateral and regional diplomacy was devoted to Cambodia, too. The effort was to find a way to bring about Vietnamese withdrawal from Cambodia, to reconcile Cambodia's political factions, and to hold free elections in that country.

One of the most interesting and pleasant experiences I had was in the summer of 1989, when I served as a senior member of the U.S. delegation to the first Paris Peace Conference on Cambodia. I was the U.S. spokesman in the First Committee, which was the war, peace and disarmament committee. We felt at that time, and later events showed this to be true, that while there was no major break-through during that five week session which was roughly the end of July until about Labor Day, we had in fact cleared away a lot of the political and diplomatic underbrush in some very tough committee sessions, where the U.S., France, Chinese, Soviets, Vietnamese, the Cambodian factions, the Laotians, the Thais, Indonesians and everybody else was engaged around the table. We felt that we cleared out a lot of the underbrush and that if future such conferences went well, it would lead ultimately to an accord which would have a major UN component, a peacekeeping UN group, to run elections and so on. Of course all that did come to pass later on. There in Paris in 1989, we chalked out and began to put together the framework for what finally brought a cessation of hostile activity in Cambodia. So, apart from the day in and day out bread and butter issues in the UN General Assembly—and we touched on only some of

them, although I didn't even talk about disarmament issues in the General Assembly's First Committee (these were handy perennials in the UN system before the end of the Cold War) or about Trusteeship Council issues—apart from those and the palpable crisis issues in the General Assembly and the Security Council, we were also in parallel working regularly on these other war and peace issues with major regional and even international implications. For the most part, each of these peacekeeping issues was “sui generis;” there was no applicable model to follow. Each of these peacekeeping and monitoring issues was different from all the others. Each of them required a slightly different U.S. involvement and commitment of resources and funds or what have you, so there was a tremendous amount of inter-agency work going on within the U.S. Government, on a lot of fronts.

Q: In peacekeeping, what sort of support were you getting, advice and willingness to cooperate from the Pentagon?

KIRBY: We were working with the Pentagon day in and day out, particularly in these UN monitoring or peacekeeping areas as it came time to make decisions about U.S. commitments and what equipment and support we could make available and what we couldn't make available. By and large the Pentagon was very cooperative. While it's obviously gotten a lot more complicated since then, the Somalia and Haiti operations being cases in point, at that time we were still in the mode that had long underlaid peacekeeping operations—the informal understanding that the permanent members of the Security Council would not themselves put troops into these peacekeeping forces, but that, as necessary, they would provide logistical support and what have you. My memory of it is that within budgetary limits we provided a lot of support to try to get these operations installed initially. For example, we provided a lot of air transport to get communications teams in quickly to these areas and we would take in equipment to help them set up shop and what have you. So we did a lot of flying of things in. Now, the Pentagon was very supportive and very willing to do all this. The inter-agency quarrels, such as they were, had to do with budget...with the Pentagon saying, effect, “We'll do it, but someone has

to pay for it," and State, not surprisingly, saying, "Glad to, but we don't have any money" and then going to the White House and asking the White House to get the Pentagon to undertake the operation on the promise that somebody would pay them, sometime. There was a lot of that kind of inter-agency discussion, and it took a lot of time. But operationally, the Pentagon was always prepared to be helpful. And the White House, in effect, directed them, in these cases, to lend certain types of support. Now we would always put the bill together and tell the UN what they were going to have to pay, but whether they ever did pay us back or not, I don't know.

The other thing the Pentagon did was to provide occasional limited planning support to the UN. One of the things that became clear, and obviously it's in the press now and it's become even clearer as the years have gone on, is how relatively limited the capacity of the UN in New York is for planning and directing peacekeeping operations, particularly with the present multiplicity of operations. So when we saw some things going slowly...I've forgotten whether it was the Gulf, the end-game in the Persian Gulf, or whether it was something to do with Namibia...I just don't remember...it might have been the Persian Gulf—we quietly asked the UN planners in New York whether they'd like us to send a Pentagon logistical expert or two to New York to help them out and work on some of their systems with them. They quickly responded positively and appreciatively. So we did that kind of thing. We were happy to do that. I won't go into detail, but in ticking off above the various UN operations that were set in train at that time, I mentioned Namibia, and I should also have mentioned the one in Angola as well. I also visited that one in July, 1989, as well as the one in Namibia. Both operations, though relatively small, were, nonetheless, symbolically important.

Q: Did you notice a diminution of interest of the Soviet Union in international relations as compared to before because of its own internal reform, Gorbachev and all that during this particular time?

KIRBY: I think that's a profound question. Although I like to think I am usually prescient, the answers to that are clearer to me now than they were at the time and I'm not alone in that, I would guess. My IO/UNP team and I think, our guys in New York, didn't sense any marked diminution in the Soviet effort toward the UN at the time. It may well have reduced, however. It was not that the Soviets were less interested, it was just that they didn't have the high-level time to devote to it. We did find, although I think we were reluctant to admit it even to ourselves, we found the Soviets—and I'm going to say it as its crudest...but I hope it makes a positive point—we found them a little bit less of a nuisance in the General Assembly in those last couple of years of the 1980's than we had normally found them. They were there. They were active. Their Deputy Foreign Minister who handled international organization affairs practically camped in New York during the General Assembly, where he and his associates were roundly proclaiming that they were the “new Soviet Men”, that they weren't the bad old obstructionist guys of the old days...that they wanted to engage constructively, and that we should take them seriously and should give them a chance. They promised that on disarmament issues and across the board, if we would sit down and reason with them, they would play a constructive role. I was always concerned, and I think my staff was too, that they were trying to gull us. My colleagues would have to speak for themselves. I don't know how they all see it in 1996, but I think that was our concern then. And in fact the language the Soviets used...we are all prisoners of language from time to time...the Soviets, the way they put things, in the end when you would analyze things, it seemed like “old wine in new bottles”...more of the same policies maybe with different packaging. But the one thing we did notice was that there wasn't quite the steam, venom, the tactical hammering at us that had gone on in earlier years. During an early period (and I've been talking up to now about the New York scene) we doubted whether Gorbachev really meant it when he started hinting to UN officials, and then to us, that he was prepared to leave Afghanistan...we had some real doubt about that. As time went on, it became clear that he was in fact leaving Afghanistan—we did begin to notice signs. And we were accommodating on Afghanistan and other issues in the UN to the extent we could be without giving anything essential away. It was only I think, a year or

two later that it became clear that yes, the Soviets really had not been devoting as much time and attention to international affairs across the board as had earlier been their wont. This brings us full circle back to your question: maybe their interest hadn't diminished, but maybe their energy and the time and attention that they could devote to making the world an uncomfortable place for the rest of us had diminished.

Q: You were probably the man who would send out the shopping list of telegrams to all the Embassies around the world saying please, we want your vote on this...get the country where you're representing the U.S. to vote this way and that way. I have a good number of stories of people going into like the Central African Republic and asking to please vote for supporting whaling limitations, and them saying, "Well, we'd be happy to but what's a whale?" A lot of these...or asking Iraq to vote to support Israel or something like that. Do you have any stories or things about replies or responses you were getting on this yearly shopping list?

KIRBY: This is a bit of a digression, maybe, but the most famous story in that regard is probably one you've heard. This occurred many, many years ago; it's a true story, but I don't recall whether the demarche was within the UN framework or if it was purely on a bilateral issue—probably the latter, since it had to do with the Indian Ocean and the growing U.S. interest in the small island of Diego Garcia. The famous story runs that back when the Indians were pounding us on Diego Garcia, instructions went out from Washington: Go in worldwide at the highest level and tell the respective governments the following (specified) points and report back immediately. A comical reply came back. My memory tells me it came back from our Embassy in Burma but, in any case whichever host government it was, our Embassy sent an amusing telegram back to Washington stating that the host government "thinks that Diego Garcia is a good, cheap Cuban cigar." (Laughs) It's like your point of "what is a whale?" A word is in order about those round-robin demarches because even before I went into that job and certainly afterwards too, when I was Ambassador in Togo, I was the recipient of many such cables instructing me and the Embassy team to go in and make the following points to the host government.

I usually thought that the cables were too all-encompassing. In the old days we were told to go in and tell governments that several dozen issues were of “critical” importance to the United States. Then there wasn't enough of a differentiation. It always brought to my mind the old saying that when everything's important or critical, nothing's important. And so my advice, and I was always on record to that effect, as many others were, was that such demarches should be kept down to the real essentials and that they should be made simple. Another thing that I found is that the talking points were always way too elaborate, even though in oral conversation when you're abroad you're not going to make every single such point to the Foreign Office. Sometimes they were even too elaborate to translate and leave behind with the Ministry, even though we made a conscientious effort to do that. One of the things my IO/UNP group and I tried to do, was to make a real, if important, stab at the problem. I hope we made a few gains. We tried to trim the list of issues, and we tried to whittle the talking points down to some zingers and to get away from the overly-elaborate explanations of our position. I think that...I don't remember that during my time that we got any particularly witty or complaining responses from the field, but there were those occasionally who would say that they thought certain issues on the list were of only minimal concern to their country of accreditation. More often, and I had believed this to be true before I went into the IO job, from parts of the developing world, and particularly from Africa, we would get back cables saying, “OK, we have made the demarche. The man in the Foreign Office whom we're supposed to tell these things, listened intently, said he would tell his Minister or President what we had said, but then noted that basically this country's Permanent Representative in New York will do whatever he wants to when voting time comes, because this government doesn't communicate regularly with its Perm Rep in New York and leaves a lot of the initiative to him on UN voting.” In fact, a lot of governments don't communicate all that much with their UN missions. Our Embassies would then enjoin the Department to make sure that our UN mission in New York was weighing in regularly with their counterparts there in New York on those issues that we really cared about. And so we would reinforce that from here. Thus, I think that the main thing I remember about it was how often our embassies in the

developing world would say, “OK, we've done what you've said, we've gone to the Foreign Minister and he says he will instruct his Perm Rep, but make sure something is going into the ear of the Perm Rep in New York from U.S. Mission officers the day of the vote.”

Q: Our mission has a finite number of people in New York and there are a lot of countries out there. Prior to these votes, I would think you would be called upon to reinforce our people there so they could all get out and around and talk to the equivalent representatives from Togo or something like that.

KIRBY: Very much so; that was one of the things we regularly tried to do. This is an imperfect art but I think its always been done in the IO. We tried to keep a box score as our embassies would report in on the results of their demarches: “Country X agrees with us on items 2, 4, 6, is dead set against us on items 3 and 8, and is shaky on the additional items,” for example. And we'd try to keep a running score. You could do it on all the important items although certain items were more important than others. Then there were issues that you felt were particularly important to the U.S. government, so sometimes we'd go back to the field and instruct embassies to have another go at the local governments. Often we'd remind New York to weigh in with other missions, but New York was pretty alert on its own. Our Mission kept its own box score as to who the shakies were and who the probables were and what have you, as major votes approached. We would remind our Mission, but they would usually have weighed in on their own initiative. In the days leading up to an important vote...we and New York were trying to work closely together. In many ways, New York played a more central role there than we did in Washington because they were on the spot at the UN. They would try to identify the key person in the African caucus who cared deeply about a particular issue of interest to the U.S. government, or someone in the Asian group who got around a lot and carried with him the respect of his fellow Asian diplomats on the issue. Our Mission was quite adept at that in New York...at targeting the people who mattered; we tried to reinforce that from here. On issues that were considered make-or-break, the IO Bureau would call into the Department the local Ambassadors from the Central American group, or the Asian group or whichever group or groups were key to

an upcoming vote and have high-level Department officials address them. Fairly frequently on issues we really cared about, we would call in the Ambassadors, the Washington-based Ambassadors, and have the Assistant Secretaries for IO and for the geographic regional Bureau involved—NEA, AF, EA or what have you—address these Ambassadors and enjoin them to let their governments know that this was an issue of importance to the United States, and that we were asking for their support.

Q: Harmon, January 20, 1989, the Bush Administration took over. Although Bush had been Vice President under Ronald Reagan, it's often been said that as far as Administrations go, it was almost like a hostile change of administrations like what happens between Democrats and Republicans. I mean he changed things quite a bit. Obviously he had his own people. Did you see any effect, a difference with George Bush who had been an Ambassador to the United Nations, while you served there the nine or so months?

KIRBY: Yes. I think that President Bush did at least two things early on in his Administration that symbolically were very important and were designed to show that he and his Administration were not hostile to the UN and certainly were prepared to work with it. One, that I recall is that very shortly after the Bushes had moved into the White House, a week or two, his first dinner guest...an informal dinner...it wasn't an affair of state, was Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary General of the UN. Bush and Perez de Cuellar had known each other in the 1970's when Bush was our Perm Rep to the UN and Perez was the Perm Rep of Peru. Bush invited him down on that informal basis, but it was understood by everybody as a gesture designed to indicate that we wanted to work constructively with the UN. The second thing that happened, and I recall that it happened that spring fairly early in the new Administration, was that the President and Secretary Baker—I've forgotten the form of the announcement, whether it came from the White House or State Department—while calling again for the UN to put its budgetary house in order (the thing we referred to earlier) stated very clearly that the U.S. should pay its UN arrears. It wouldn't be easy...it was a big bill that was owed—it was in the hundreds of millions of

dollars at that time—but the President said he was going to find a way with Congress to resolve those arrears. The statement indicated an intention to pay up by a specified date, although I've forgotten what the date was. So these were taken as important assertions of a new general attitude towards the UN.

What I'm going to relate now, perhaps was done during the Reagan period as well; its just that it didn't happen in my time. It may well have happened earlier. Fairly early in the Bush Administration, in late Spring or early Summer of 1989, Perez de Cuellar and members of his team came down to Washington for meetings with Secretary Baker. I sat in on those meetings, partially as note taker. And it was a good exchange between America's top diplomat, the Secretary of State, and the international figure, Perez de Cuellar, on a whole range of issues that we hoped to engage the UN on and on which we and the UN were already engaged at that time. These were substantive talks. After those meetings, in his photo-media op outside the Department, Perez de Cuellar said some very nice things about the tone of the discussions. So, in general, the tone seemed to be all right. And later on, we would find as we got on to the Gulf War and so on that it was very useful indeed to have the UN engaged in these matters.

Q: At that time certainly, a burr under our IO saddle for some time had been the ranking Republican on the Foreign Affairs Committee, Senator Jesse Helms of North Carolina. Was he a problem at that time that you recall?

KIRBY: I don't recall specifically. He was certainly interested in the Southern Africa issues that we were engaged in. My memory of it is that he didn't see some of those issues the same way the Administration did. I don't remember him as being a particularly obstructive or difficult person on them across the board during the time I was involved, however. He was a force to be reckoned with on the budgetary issues, of course. He was one of many who felt in effect, that the U.S. had already paid the UN as much as we owed them and that we shouldn't worry overly about the arrears. And then we got into—I don't want to bore you with details and frankly don't recall them all myself—but we got into

a long running debate with some members of Congress on housing allowances for our people at the Mission in New York. The allowances were being cut back, and it was very hard for them to live there. I don't want to unfairly attribute something to Senator Helms and his staff, but my memory is that they weren't very helpful on that issue either. These are issues that General Walters went up to the Hill to testify on, and testified very constructively. The Administration wanted to work with the Hill on them. It was a noisome matter, but not a major policy problem. It was a niggling problem that had real salience for the individuals involved in New York. My memory is that Helms and his staff weren't very helpful on those small issues, but that the major issue on which they were noticeably unhelpful was on payment of arrears.

Q: Were there any other matters we should talk about in the UN before we move on?

KIRBY: Inevitably some will probably come to mind afterwards; it was a busy time and a busy assignment. As you would expect, the fascinating thing about it was that the UN is involved in the whole world. One thing I might just mention as a footnote to our discussion is that one of the things my office did at the time was to track the “non-aligned” movement, i.e., the formal Non-Aligned Movement. There were annual Non-Aligned conferences where the Non-Aligned would get together and chalk out policy positions which they would later take to the UN to try to implement. Usually the Non-Aligned would meet in the late summer and adopt policy positions for the UN General Assembly for the fall. I would usually send a member of my staff to whichever capital was hosting the Non-Aligned Conference. That person, working in tandem with the local U.S. embassy, would meet people, express U.S. views, and report the results to Washington. It was another issue area that was of some interest to us.

Q: How did we view the Non-Aligned group? At one time it was viewed as being almost a sub- unit of the Soviet Union, but by this time how was it viewed?

KIRBY: At one time we certainly did feel that it voted Soviet positions far more frequently than it voted positions of comfort to us. I don't know what our view of it is today, but I think that in the late 1980's we were wondering whether the Non-Aligned Movement wasn't growing increasingly irrelevant to the real world. The Soviet Union hadn't quite fallen apart yet, but obviously there had been a great change in the balance of forces in the world, and we sensed that even outspoken non-aligned types like the Indians, were looking for a new role for the organization. The prime movers in the Non-Aligned Movement knew that the game had changed in the world, but they weren't quite sure what their role should be. They kept assuring themselves and the world that they had a role, but they were having difficulty defining it.

Q: How did you find China at this point?

KIRBY: China...we found it a mixed bag, I think. Looking at it from my perspective, we didn't always find them helpful on the margins of the Security Council as we were trying to wind things down in the Iran-Iraq conflict. After all, the Chinese were the ones who were supplying the “Silk Worm” missile to the area. On the other hand, they were generally helpful on Afghanistan, as you would expect. They saw that as a way of poking the Soviets in the eye. They were also helpful on Cambodia during that period—in the preparations leading up to the Peace Conference in Paris that I alluded to earlier and in the Conference itself where the Chinese (as luck of the draw would have it) sat next to us at the table. We found them quite cooperative. Again, they were trying to do the Soviets and the Vietnamese “one in the eye” if you will. They saw a community of interest with us. Selectively they were helpful. In other areas they were sometimes not as helpful as they might have been, e.g., on Iran-Iraq, as I said.

Q: How about Cuba? Did Cuba weigh rather heavily with us as far as within the UN?

KIRBY: There were a couple of things I should mention. One had to do with economic matters. Cuba's supporters were moving annual resolutions in the General Assembly

trying to condemn us for our embargo and calling for an end to the embargo. The place where we were actually engaged with the Cubans, if somewhat indirectly, was on the “end game” in Angola, which spanned the Angola-Namibia set of issues. We were interested in getting the Cubans out of Angola. The essential negotiations were multi-sided, but the primary negotiators were Angola, Cuba and South Africa, with the Soviets, the U.S. and the UN as observers. It was that set of issues that took me to Angola for negotiations in Luanda; Cuba had a big delegation there, headed by their Deputy Foreign Minister.

Q: The reason for the Cuban involvement was that they had a considerable number of troops there.

KIRBY: Part of the “end-game” was to get them to withdraw troops from Angola, which ultimately happened. We were encouraging that. That was a way in which, while we were not directly engaged, we were an important part of a diplomatic process that worked in the end. They left Angola. The tone of the negotiations in Luanda and elsewhere was helpful. There were frequent meetings in 1984—one in South Africa, one in Angola. In Luanda the Cubans, as nearly as one could tell at the table (I don't know what went on behind the scenes) were fairly low key and adopted what was, on the whole, a conciliatory tone. I emphasize the tone...they didn't go out of their way in those sessions to muddy the waters at that time, which came fairly late in the negotiating process. And in the end, they got out of Angola, and the South Africans ceased their support for the other side in Angola.

Q: Why don't we now come to your leaving the UN...when...in the autumn of 1989? And where did you go?

KIRBY: From September, 1989, and for about a year thereafter, I was Director of the Office of Performance Evaluation for the State Department, which made me a senior member of the staff of the Director General of the Foreign Service. I ran the Foreign Service Promotion Boards for about a year but also did other things for the Director General, as well.

Q: What impression of how, at that time, promotions were done and all? Was it a well established procedure or what?

KIRBY: I thought it was a well-established procedure for promotions although, when I arrived, I thought the precepts for the promotion boards were incredibly unwieldy and unreadable in places. We made a major effort to trim them down and refine them. Every so many years management negotiates new precepts with the American Foreign Service Association. So, we rewrote the precepts that year and renegotiated them satisfactorily. While this new version was a big improvement, it was still a very unwieldy set of guidelines. Part of the problem was that over the years, so many special interest groups in the Department had added various clauses and phrases to the precepts. While I have no specific knowledge of what the promotion precepts are like today, I read recently that they have been completely revamped and are now more readable and useable. I hope that is the case. Certainly I left that office in 1990 thinking that a lot more could be done in that regard. But once again, I would note that in 1989-90, we greatly improved the old precepts. We put better precepts together. To return to your question, the procedures for setting up the promotion boards had been pretty well established for many years. We had other kinds of boards, too. In addition to the promotion boards, we had tenure boards for tenuring new officers, and at that time we also administered (they now no longer exist) boards to award Senior Performance pay. Regarding the latter, I don't think anybody was wholly satisfied with the performance pay precepts, which were squishy in the extreme. We revised them and improved the process, but it was still far from perfect. Mind you, I think the Performance Pay Boards got good results. I think the people who should have gotten the pay usually got it, but it was never very clear from the precepts how the Boards should make that decision. People in the field—rating, reviewing, and rated officers—never did, at that time, have clear guidelines. We started refining the process, and, then, while I was next overseas, my successors refined it further. Just about the time the whole program was being structured sensibly, Performance Pay was jettisoned by the Department for budgetary reasons.

Q: Two things that have been with us for quite a long time now have been pressures concerning minorities, especially blacks and Hispanics and women to push them up through the system in a way faster—on the theory that the Foreign Service has not been kind to these particular groups. Did this have any particular impact on your job and work?

KIRBY: It really didn't except for the fact that women and minorities had to sit on all our Boards. We were not given, by the Director General, any instructions to pass to the Boards touching either of these groups. We gave no special instructions to Board members on how to handle women or identifiable minorities to the extent they could somehow be identified. I should note that the only employee identification that Board members had in reading files was simply the name and social security number of the person being evaluated. We were not given any special instructions, no.

Q: I think implicit in the whole system to those who read the records, you can usually tell whether it is a woman or a man. And often they can tell where somebody got an education or they know by personal knowledge or by somebody else, who is Hispanic or Black or something. It has been implicit that one wants to make sure that one doesn't get too far off the reservation as far as moving ahead on these two fronts.

KIRBY: Well, I think that's probably right but you know, I can't guess at what goes through the head of a Board member. It would be a fair guess, in an era when one is supposed to be promoting women that, all things being equal, if women whose files are being read meet the tests and have the right reports, a fair number of them will emerge from the process with their names on the promotion list. It's a little different for others, though. These days, unlike the old days, it goes back to what I said, about all Board members get...they do get the person's profile, but so much is excised these days, including education. You don't know what university they went to. No college names or dates are given, and age is not given. All that information is taken off the profile these days. Now one

could speculate that if you saw a Hispanic name, that it might convey something to you. I don't think things are weighed in that way, however. I really don't.

Q: You mentioned that there were other issues that you dealt with for the Director General, any that you care to mention?

KIRBY: I got involved in several things of interest. For example, when the DG's office decided to re-define and elaborate the multi-functional cone, I was one of those that got involved in helping to do that. The multi-functional cone was designed to encourage people to serve outside their conal speciality; the inducement was that they would have two bites at the promotion apple in the middle grades. Multi-functional officers would compete for promotion in their conal specialties and in the multi-functional cone, too. A lot of people are promoted as multi-functional. I also got very much involved in the debate over whether officers should be given a cone, a specialization, upon entrance into the Foreign Service, or whether that should come later, and on what the rules should be for designating cones for people. And then I was also one of those involved in the discussion of, and decisions relating to, how the Senior Foreign Service should be handled with respect to allowable time-in-class. The trade-off which we arrived at in the end tended to eliminate, or at least vastly reduce, the use of Limited Career Extensions, in return for slightly increased tenure in the senior ranks.

Q: In other words a person reached a time in class...

KIRBY: Well, we took a decision to trim the Limited Career Extensions way down, but to extend modestly the number of years people could spend in the senior ranks. We changed the rules to permit people to carry over from the Counselor rank to the Minister-Counselor rank, the number of years remaining in their tenure as Counselor, so that for those two grades together, an officer could serve, if he or she chose, a total of not less than fourteen years.

Q: There was a thing where somebody was really doing well and got promoted early...would probably get washed out by somebody that was plodding along.

KIRBY: But the trade-off was, as I said, effectively to pretty much eliminate the Limited Career Extensions.

Q: Did you get involved in performance evaluations about the problems of selection out and that sort of thing?

KIRBY: Well, in the sense of having to constitute the boards, yes. Having to put together the boards that would consider the files of those officers who had been referred for further review by the regular selection boards.

Q: How did you find that process work? I've been out of it for a long time but I kind of had the feeling that if somebody makes a complaint they can...if they have been low ranked or something, if they complain or lodge a grievance, then they can stay on almost forever while the process goes on. Did you get any feel for that?

KIRBY: First of all, I think that the Review Boards that looked at people functioned very well, although annually the regular Selection Boards referred very few cases to such Review Boards for possible “Selection Out.” In the end, few people left the Foreign Service through that mechanism. Contrary to what historically had been the way the Foreign Service Act had been set up, few people were going out through the Selection-out process. I didn't have the grievance procedure under my domain, that was a separate office. But, yes, that office would come to us and ask us to put a hold on certain kinds of termination decisions until they could consider grievances. That was sometimes a lengthy process. And yes, it was apparent that many people were able to bring things under review by the grievance staff, were able to get things excised then from their performance files, that would lead to a new board looking at their file. Many of them would then be promoted

and retained. A lot of employees were saved on a second look by new ad hoc boards which my office set up and administered.

Q: You left there when?

KIRBY: I left there is September of 1990 and then went off to Togo as Ambassador at the end of November of 1990.

Q: You were in Togo from when to when?

KIRBY: From the end of November of 1990 until mid to late July 1994.

Q: Harmon, how did you get to be Ambassador?

KIRBY: Through clean living and pious deeds. (laughs) I had indicated sometime earlier along the way that I was interested in becoming Chief of Mission, if possible. I thought I had the requisite talent, interest, and background, and I had said to successive Director Generals that I would be pleased to be Chief of Mission anywhere they chose, certainly in areas where I claimed some expertise...South Asia, Africa, the Middle East, North Africa. I don't tie my appointment to the Administration as such, of course, but about the time of the beginning of the Bush Administration, I began hearing from various people...the Director General and his Deputies, the Assistant Secretaries of a couple of Bureaus, and others on the 6th and 7th floors, that they thought that the time was right and that I had a reasonable chance of being put on various lists for consideration. And so, that pleased me. I was told sometime in the autumn of 1988 or in early 1989 that my name had been on a list or two which had gone to the so-called “D” Committee...the committee that is chaired by the Under Secretary of State to make recommendations to the Secretary and then on to the White House about career Foreign Service ambassadorial appointments. My name had gone to the “D” committee for a couple of jobs, and I was told that in the ensuing discussion my case had been very favorably considered each time, but that I was edged out by someone who had been (as they put it) “waiting in the queue a little longer” whose

name had also been before the committee previously. I heard that the Under Secretary had said that they should keep my name on the lists for further consideration. He, and others, apparently thought that clearly it was something that would come to fruition. In March of 1990, suddenly our Ambassador in Togo, who was a career officer, said that he wished to resign later that year, I was asked if I would be interested in the job and I said “yes”. And so people were very nice about it and I had a lot of support—the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, the Director General and others supported it. I'm told that the Under Secretary for Political Affairs and the Deputy Secretary of State strongly supported it. The “D” Committee voted favorably and then my name went to the Secretary and on to the White House. I took...that was at the very end of March, and the usual background investigations took place, and then the papers finally went to the Senate, I think, in the late summer or early fall...maybe late August or early September. I and seven other nominees for Ambassadorial posts in Africa had our hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, as I recall, in mid-October of 1990. I was then sworn in as Ambassador on the 15th of November and left Washington two days after Thanksgiving that year to go to Togo.

Q: Was there any attention paid to any of you going out to Africa by the Senate committee?

KIRBY: In a sense there was. We went together before the African Subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the chair that day was Senator Paul Simon of Illinois, who was Chairman of the Subcommittee. Senator Sarbanes from Maryland was there, and I think there may have been one or two other Senators there, too. But, I have a strong memory of Senators Simon and Sarbanes, especially, putting questions to each of us, and they were good questions. Senator Simon's questions tended to be on the substance of U.S. policy towards the countries we were going to. Senator Sarbanes did a bit of that too. But then in my case, although not with others for some reason, he tried to draw me out on what I thought about the ratio among Ambassadorial appointments

between career officers and political appointees. I had to fence a little bit and try to be fair to all sides. It seemed to come out all right in the exchange.

Q: Before you went out to Togo, obviously you were doing your homework and getting briefed, what were American interests in Togo at that point...and did you go out with the equivalent of a list of things that should be done?

KIRBY: Yes, I think so. U.S. interests were political stability, economic development but political change...and above all political change in the direction of pluralism and the opening up of the political culture and the movement towards democracy. I was encouraged to believe that one of my jobs would be to try to move them towards a greater measure of democracy, pluralism, a greater respect for human rights. Also, Togo had been pretty solidly friendly to the United States up to that point, and we wanted to keep them very much in our corner, supportive in the UN and elsewhere on things that mattered to us. When I got to Togo the Gulf War was looming. We didn't know what votes might be necessary along the way, but we were anticipating some in the UN and elsewhere, and we wanted to be sure we had the support...as much international support as we could in the likely political-military undertaking to come. So that was the range of issues that I was set to address when I arrived.

Q: You got there at the end of 1990 approximately?

KIRBY: November, 1990.

Q: What was the situation in Togo when you arrived?

KIRBY: The situation was unusual, because Togo, which had been ruled by an authoritarian regime for 25 years, where political dissent was not particularly tolerated, was at the very beginning of a period of turbulence. Dissidence towards the regime and people wanting a greater measure of democracy were at that time inaugurating a movement to change the political culture. I might say by way of background that it was

an extraordinarily interesting and fascinating time to be in Africa. It seems to me that intellectually, emotionally, politically, and diplomatically there have been two great periods in Africa in the recent, modern period, i.e., in the period of our time on active duty in the Foreign Service. One, obviously was the period 1956-1960, particularly the year 1960, when so many countries in Africa became independent, and the immediate years right after 1960 when the Congo (now Zaire) and a host of other countries were trying to sort out their political arrangements for the future. But then for so many of those countries, in fairly short order, the long dark night descended. The authoritarian curtain came down, tough military regimes ensued, and in so many countries, political grid-lock lasted for a very long time. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, I can't remember the exact number, but in about 25 countries throughout Africa, predominately in the West and Central Africa, you suddenly had populations trying to get rid of the old authoritarian regimes. I think it is quite clear that a couple of important things had set this in motion. One was what they referred to in West Africa as the “Wind from the East”. The authoritarian regimes—a different kind of regime perhaps—but the authoritarian regimes that had broken down in Eastern Europe at the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's, brought the end of the old order in that region. And not surprisingly, you suddenly had Africans asking, “Well, if democracy is good enough for the rest of the world, then why not for us...are we different? Should we not experience it and benefit from the joys...and manage our own affairs as well?” So events in Eastern Europe had had a powerful impact. The Africa downfall of the Marxist regimes had a powerful impact in Africa, particularly since so many of these African regimes (although not Togo) had looked for sustenance and support to an East European Marxist order that no longer existed. And so that caused the democratic forces in Africa to say that this was now the time for them to go for a new order. Along with that, the United States, Germany, and the European Community, which had always been in favor of democracy in Africa, began talking the concept up even more conspicuously. And, somewhat surprisingly...at least it was surprising to me...at that period the French began talking democracy up too. I guess it was the summer of 1990 when President Mitterrand, to everyone's surprise, at either a Francophone Summit or an African Summit

at La Baulo in France, read a speech in which he called for greater democracy in Africa. While he backed away from that a bit a couple of years later, suddenly you had in Africa both the “Wind from the East” and increased open Western pressure for democracy. The United States, Germany, and the European Community said that thereafter economic aid and development assistance were going to be channeled primarily to those countries which were freeing up markets and doing the right thing economically, but also were showing respect for human rights and opening up their systems towards pluralism and democracy. More guardedly, even the French seemed to be saying the same thing. The African populations found all this very appealing. So there was an extraordinary amount of effervescence throughout Africa, but especially West and Central Africa, starting in 1989 and extending through 1993-94.

My wife and I arrived in Togo just as all that was happening. I mentioned that we arrived on the 30th of November, 1990. On the 6th and 7th of October—about 6 weeks before we arrived—Togo had seen the first political riots that it had experienced in 25 years, with rampaging youth and others, burning government installations and what have you. So that happened in mid-October, and, then, the last week of November, a couple of days before we arrived, there was a second wave of fairly destructive demonstrations, although not as destructive as the first wave. But, again, people were in the streets, with taxi drivers joining the demonstrators this time and bringing transportation to a standstill. So clearly something new was in train. There was then a pause in the turbulence in December/ January and February, and while I can't prove it, I myself, have always attributed the pause in Togo to the Gulf War. It was even more fun to watch the Gulf War on CNN or local French-fed television, to read about it in the newspapers, or talk about it with your friends, then to be out demonstrating because of local politics.

Q: It engaged people's attention...

KIRBY: It diverted people's attention from their local politics. And as soon as the Gulf War was over though, real politics broke out in Togo again with very destructive local

demonstrations occurring less than two weeks after the war's conclusion. All of 1990 and 1991, and much of 1992 and early 1993, were truly tumultuous years. This turbulence was something that modern Togo, since gaining independence in 1960, had not known. At the Embassy we were appropriately, responsibly, centrally involved in the effort to help the Togolese create a new democratic political culture.

Q: Well now, who was the President when you arrived?

KIRBY: The President when I arrived had been the President for a very long time and is still the President. His last name is Eyadema, Gnassingbe Eyadema. He is the President of the country.

Q: When you arrived did you present your credentials rather quickly?

KIRBY: Very quickly. I arrived at 9:00 on Friday evening and presented my credentials at 8:00 a.m. Monday morning.

Q: Did Eyadema have any interest in the American Ambassador, and were you able to engage...I mean, how did you relate with him?

KIRBY: He had enormous respect for the United States and was very much interested in having good relations with the United States and in being fully engaged with the American Ambassador. While there had been ups and downs in U.S.-Togo relations, Eyadema wanted the friendship of the people and government of the United States, just as people of Togo, for perhaps somewhat different reasons, wanted the friendship of the United States. We were then giving significant economic assistance to the country but that was by no means the most important thing. This may sound corny but it's the simple truth. The United States then enjoyed, and perhaps still does—I certainly hope so—enormous moral authority in Togo. We used that moral coinage very, very effectively, I think, and even increased it. Unlike the French and the Germans, we had had no colonial experience in Togo and not much elsewhere in Africa. We had not been an occupier. The

Togolese tended to believe that we called the shots the way we saw them. They (i.e., the Togolese Government) might not like the political prescriptions and the medicines we prescribed sometimes, but they believed that we believed our own analysis and that we meant what we said. And, they didn't sense that we had ulterior motives. We had a modest but reasonably good trade relationship with Togo at the turn of the 1990's, but it was not on a scale with what the French or Germans enjoyed, and certainly we didn't have any investments there to speak of, as the French and Germans did. So, the Togolese tended to see us as fairly disinterested and dispassionate, and our moral authority was very important. It didn't move mountains, it didn't produce miracles, but as the early 1990's unfolded, it did in the end, save some lives and help curb army violence against the population in periods of crisis. It also helped to move Togo toward democratic parliamentary elections, which the democratic opposition to the President won. (The Presidential elections, which Eyadema won, were another matter).

Q: Treat this both chronologically but with the President, how did you deal with the President, what was the routine?

KIRBY: I saw President Eyadema quite frequently, particularly in my first two or three years, even thereafter I saw him frequently, and we also spoke on the telephone very often. He would often call me in, particularly in the period 1991-92, when he was trying to gain points with us and respectability with us as he was being attacked by his opponents. He would call me, or sometimes I would have something from Washington that I needed to take up with him that would cause me to initiate the contact, but often I would just ask for an appointment in order to chat him up. And certainly throughout my time there, I think throughout the 44 months, but certainly the first three years, I saw him more frequently than any other foreign representative did, including during times of real crisis.

Q: Were these frank talks?

KIRBY: As such things go, I think they were very, very frank. I don't mean to sound self-serving, but I always said very bluntly what was on my mind, particularly as we moved closer to palpable crisis. I would begin a sentence by saying, “Mr. President”, and I would use forms of address that are within the acceptable diplomatic range. But in terms of giving my analysis of where I thought Togo was going, and of what I thought his responsibility was for some pretty egregious actions—because he and his military officers were responsible for some pretty egregious incidents—I was candid to the point of being very, very blunt. And he claimed he appreciated that. On certain things, he was frank with me. There were other times when I knew he was speaking for the record, and it was as if he had turned on a gramophone record. In that latter mode he repeated endlessly that he had invented democracy in Togo, had never wanted to be President anyway, didn't know why he had the job, etc., etc. Well, this was ho-hum stuff. This wasn't serious. But there were times when he would let his hair down. If he had any of his close associates in the meeting, I was likely to get the “speaking for the record” routine. When we were “tete-a-tete,” however, which was about two-thirds of the time, he was fairly frank, I thought.

Q: Could you describe the political developments in Togo, various crises, I mean, sort of work it chronologically and what you were doing?

KIRBY: 1991, as I've already said, was a very turbulent year. After the pause for the Gulf War that I referred to earlier, in mid-March there was a further series of destructive riots which effectively (though not in name) put the prevailing Eyadema government out of business. There was no effective government for a very long time thereafter. There was a nominal government, but there wasn't any attempt at real governance. The demand of the opposition to the President, copying from the experience of Benin and some of their other neighbors, was for a national conference in which the opposing sides would sit down and chart out a new political future for Togo. The President and his people resisted that on the grounds that they couldn't give equal status to the opposition. But in the end, after the riots in March I mentioned, some further trouble in April and then a general strike with a

few people killed (not many) in the first part of June, the government decided to negotiate a formula for convening a meeting with the opposition. The opposition continued to want a National Conference because of the implication that a National Conference might perhaps declare itself sovereign and chart a completely new political future. The Eyadema people continued to resist that, talking instead about convening a “National Forum”, where all sides could express their views. The idea was, “come, let us gather together, and talk.” So, anyway, the National Conference, as it came to be known, convened about the second week of July, 1991. What the Conference did, predictably, was immediately to declare itself “sovereign,” and the Eyadema delegates, including his government's cabinet ministers walked out and said they wouldn't participate. And then the French, American and German Ambassadors worked together and devised a formula to get Eyadema and government people to rejoin the conference. A tumultuous six-week conference then ensued.

Q: Well, tell me, here you're going through turbulence in a country and then the French, the American, and the German Ambassadors are sitting down and participating in mediation. How did this occur?

KIRBY: I will try to answer that question. Let me first say that I think the mere fact of such close American, French and German cooperation in a Francophone country like Togo was almost unparalleled. During that period the three of us, were in almost constant contact day and night. It had a lot to do with our personal chemistry, and with the way our governments, and we too as individuals saw the world and saw the movement toward democracy in Africa. We felt that Togo should move toward a modern political culture and our governments thought so, too. I think all three government headquarters were, nonetheless, bemused and maybe nonplused by the degree of cooperation, often of an ad hoc nature, which we developed on the spot. The German Ambassador once told me that his Division Director back in Bonn's Foreign Ministry had said to him when he was on leave, “This is unparalleled, things usually don't work that way, but it seems to be working, so you should keep it up.” It was that sort of thing. We did it ourselves, consistent, of

course with our government's overall policies and general instructions to us. We liked each other, and liked working together. We saw a shared interest. We also estimated that in this period things were going to get worse before they got better politically, and in terms of the breakdown of public order, etc. We three thought that both in policy terms, and with regard to protecting our respective communities, our embassies and our personnel, it was terribly important that the Togolese government understand privately and the Togolese people understand publicly that we presented a united front. We were always on television making our points. I would frequently do things separately from the other two Ambassadors, but we were also regularly doing things together. And so that there wouldn't be any sense of “outsiders”, i.e., foreigners, trying to manipulate the political process, we agreed that we should be as dispassionate as we could, and do our professional best to assist bitter Togolese opponents to find a framework for dialogue during the country's period of travail.

So much for background. How did we get involved incrementally? The Togolese needed help on certain things. It was a very fast moving situation. It would change sometimes by the quarter hour. Occasionally developments would have physical security implications. As on the day toward the end of the conference when Eyadema, without warning, shut it down, ringed the hall with soldiers and said that they were going to do various sobering things if the delegates didn't vacate the hall. The delegates definitely said they wouldn't vacate, and it looked as if things were going to spill over into the streets, where there was already a lot of edginess and strife. When things move that quickly, you don't have a lot of time to seek instructions from headquarters. What you do is what we did that afternoon, agreeing quickly, using your best judgment.

I'm now leaping ahead to the end of August, 1991, at the end of the conference when Eyadema was trying to shut it down and the French and German Ambassadors and I were afraid that a lot of blood was going to flow in the streets. It was unusual, I admit, but we didn't even take time to make a telephone call across the way to the President's quarters to ask for an appointment. We simply saddled up and quite deliberately got into one car (mine as it turned out) and appeared at his gates and said, “We must see the President.”

He admitted us and we, in a long session, elaborated something on the spot. As we talked, a formula for persuading the President to withdraw the troops and permit the conference to conclude its work peacefully came to my mind. I whispered it to my colleagues and they asked me to try it on him. So I tried it on him...”Would you agree to withdraw the troops and let this conference finish smoothly if the President of the conference (a determined opponent of President Eyadema) does the following?” (which I specified). He didn't like it at first but after further discussion, said, “Yes”, he guessed he would do that. We then saddled up and went over and imposed our presence on the President of the conference who said, “No way” would he make the gesture we were asking of him. And I said, “We will sit here forever, if necessary, until you agree.” The chairman of the conference's executive bureau, and one or two of his allies in the bureau were also in this meeting. They thought that the Ambassadors had developed a sensible formula to avoid strife. They said they agreed with the Ambassadors and told the conference President on the spot that he should accept our formula, which he did, eventually. I go into that kind of detail, because your question was a good one. How did we repeatedly get involved in mediation? Each of us was operating on the general instructions from our governments. On certain points, if I had any doubts, I would check back here. But often, in fast moving situations, I thought, and the other Ambassadors thought, that we had sufficient latitude to do whatever seemed to be the right thing to do. So at various times along the way during the conference...we didn't intervene “willy-nilly,” but as we saw real threats of bloodshed or if things were getting off the rails, we would offer advice, and people frequently would turn to us for advice.

Q: What was the thrust of the conference? More legislative assembly...?

KIRBY: How the old Eyadema government let this happen, I don't know, but it's fair to say both that the government made a number of tactical blunders during the conference and that the majority of the Togolese population was opposed to the government. It quickly turned out that probably there was a majority in the hall that was in favor of overturning the Eyadema government and doing things differently. In fact, what happened was the old

government was turned out by the conference. Eyadema was retained as a figurehead President, and the National Conference then installed an interim government with a Prime Minister chosen by the Conference and an interim legislature chosen by the Conference. There then ensued a period of uncertain and really non-government, which lasted a very long time, until political forces changed a bit and Eyadema was able to reassert himself. Eyadema began reasserting himself in autumn, 1992. That continued until the Presidential election in August 1993 where his mandate was renewed in an uncontested non-election. Eyadema and his people were busy re-installing themselves incrementally. But the period from the end of the National Conference in late August, 1991 to say about January, February, March of 1993, you had very unstable government—almost no government, in fact. You had a nominal government but nothing was happening. One of the problems was (there were many problems) that the only thing that the opposition to Eyadema could agree on was that they wanted him out. But Togolese politics, like much of African politics, tends to be a “zero-sum-game”. Each of the leaders of the opposition to Eyadema wanted to be President himself. They were all afraid that if they did not checkmate the Prime Minister whom the National Conference had chosen as head of the interim government, he would eventually become the replacement for Eyadema as President. So they fought the Prime Minister they had installed as vigorously as they had battled Eyadema. It was a prescription for instability and non-government, really, and for economic deterioration, as well.

Q: How was the economy during this period? In the first place, what was the economy of Togo at least during the time we're talking about and how did it function?

KIRBY: Up until the events of late 1990-91, in relative terms, in West African terms, the Togolese economy was doing fairly well, though not brilliantly. There had been a marked slowdown in the late 1980's, but compared with most of its neighbors, it was doing all right. The salad days had been in the 1970's—the second half of the 1970's and early 1980's. In the 1970's Togo had nationalized its biggest foreign exchange earner, which was phosphates. They have substantial phosphate deposits. And they had then over-

extended, as so many countries did at that time. Togo has a lot of assets. It had a pretty good infrastructure, with a good port, a good airport, and a good banking system. Up to about 1989, most of Togo's neighbors had been flat on their backs both politically and economically. So, at the end of the 1980's—all through the 1980's in fact—anybody who was doing banking in the region, preferred to do it in then stable Togo, not in next-door Ghana, where the economy was deteriorating, and Jerry Rawlings was an uncertain quantity, and certainly not in impoverished Marxist Benin next door, or even in Nigeria, to the east. But Togo was where people liked to bank if they could, where they liked to go for conferences...there were a lot of big hotels. For many on the West Coast of Africa it was a favorite R&R center because, a) it was stable, and b) it had the facilities and it looked relatively better than its neighbors. Now what began to happen in the 1990's was that many of these neighbors had made economic and political reforms and were beginning to look better, and thus Togo's old comparative advantage had slipped a little bit. Ghana began doing well economically. Benin is not a great case economically but its period of democratization has gone well, it's now more stable and has gotten rid of its Marxist apparatus and what have you. Moreover, in Togo, which had earlier been looking good, political and social deterioration from March of 1991 to about the middle of 1994, brought a three-year period during which Togo's economy slipped disastrously. During the political turbulence, there were rolling general strikes of varied durations. At one stage there was a nine-month general strike which brought a precipitous decline in economic activity. That's from mid-November, 1992 until about the Presidential elections in August, 1993. And so, there was no new outside investment, things weren't coming into the country, the hotels were absolutely empty, agriculture was in disarray, and there was nothing much moving on the economic front. People at the World Bank tell me that while the current picture isn't brilliant, the economy has started to move back up.

Q: Were there any American economic interests?

KIRBY: There were no major economic interests. At one time, until he left toward the end of 1991, there was an American who was the major owner and the managing director of

a small steel mill there in Lome. Up to about 1990 two-way U.S.-Togolese trade had been around 25 million dollars annually. We sell a lot of used clothes in Togo. Africa is a major market for Western used clothes and traditionally, historically, Lome was an entrepot for those clothes. And so we had a number, quite a number of people in New York and other used clothing centers who did business over there.

Q: What were your relations with those who were opposed to Eyadema?

KIRBY: Those who wanted change? Open, but very close. The U.S. was really considered to be the apostle of change, responsible political change. We, and actually the French and Germans too clearly favored an evolution toward democracy in Togo—the French for a couple of years, but later that changed when the French backed off in Togo and elsewhere in Africa. But the U.S. was considered to be in the forefront of those calling for responsible change, for the creation of a new political culture featuring pluralism, freedom of the press, respect for human rights, and democratic elections. As a consequence, all the political leaders came to my residence very often and to my office very often. On three famous occasions, after prolonged tension all the political faction leaders, including the President's people, met for the first time after extended estrangement at social gatherings at our residence. I've mentioned some of my own efforts to advance the political dialogue among Togolese. We had the efforts of some other Americans involved...I asked Assistant Secretary Cohen to come out at a period of some tension and crisis, which he did in June of 1992 for two or three days of good talks. Former President Carter and Mrs. Carter came three different times. The first time, in September of 1992, they came for 48 hours, and stayed at the residence with us. And there were various other visitors from time to time, but those are the two visits that stand out. I want to emphasize that while I had good relations with politicians opposed to President Eyadema, I also maintained good, productive relations with those of Eyadema's close associates who were sensible and moderate. My goal, and constant effort, was to try to promote responsible dialogue between the two sides—an extremely difficult task.

Q: Would the Assistant Secretary basically follow through on the suggestions that you were making?

KIRBY: Generally, yes. And reinforce the message I was regularly bearing to the Togolese President about the need for political liberalization and the need to show restraint in using instruments of state against the public. Then, with the democrats (the ones opposed to Eyadema) he again would reinforce points that we always made and which they would always accept verbally but never follow: i.e., the need to cooperate with each other and behave responsibly, by adopting a common policy which they could use as the basis for a dialogue with Eyadema, etc. Those were the major points. When somebody like the Assistant Secretary came to Togo, or a former American President, they would do what I always did when given the opportunity on leaving President Eyadema's office, or anywhere else, when the television camera would suddenly be in your face. That's an opportunity to tell the Togolese people whatever you think should be said at the time. And these were the common themes that we emphasized: the need for pluralism and the need for cooperation, restraint and dialogue, and for not seeing politics as a zero-sum-game, respect for human rights, freedom of the press.

Q: Well former President Carter has been making a career out of mediation of dispute settlement. How did he operate and how effective was he?

KIRBY: I think he reinforced some of the points that we had been making. I don't think his visits had any discernable long-term effect. That's not because the ex-President was lax or limited in any way. It was just that grid-lock was inherent in the situation, and dialogue, I took him over for meetings with President Eyadema, and then we had dinner with Eyadema. President Carter met the Prime Minister, who at the time was opposed to Eyadema, both at the Prime Minister's office and at my residence. He also met the other leaders of the democratic opposition, and then he had an opportunity on television to say the things he needed to say. His advice and his counsel about going forward toward elections was right on the mark and what we wanted to have said at the time. It was

usefully done. In his private conversations, with me before and after seeing Eyadema, President Carter was, not surprisingly, shrewd in his judgments. He didn't miss much. He understood the lay of the Togolese political landscape. I think he knew when his interlocutor was being candid and when he was simply speaking for the record. He was nice enough to try those judgments out on me to see whether I read things the same way.

Q: Well, how did this thing play out?

KIRBY: Well, I won't try to decide today whether, in the end, Togolese efforts toward democracy during that period took “two steps back and one step forward” or exactly where things came out. There was, in a way, both good news and bad news. First of all, I deliberately use the word turmoil—Togo underwent prolonged turmoil during that period. Without spelling it out, I earlier mentioned the Presidential group's use of the instruments of repression against the population. There were people killed along the way. On at least two occasions, and perhaps more, I was able to intervene, stop the guns, and save the lives of some people, I think. On other occasions, alas, there were people who lost their lives. One of several egregious episodes was the army's forceful attack on the Prime Minister's residence in December, 1991. The army blew holes in the walls and attacked the Prime Minister's establishment; some good people died that day. On the other hand, we were able to save some that day, we and the International Red Cross working together.

Q: How did you do that?

KIRBY: Two ways. One of which I'll mention here and one maybe I'll just let go in terms of details. One was intervention with the President to get the guns stopped. Secondly, there were some people who, if they had stayed around, would probably have been eliminated. So a way was found...

Q: To move them on?

KIRBY: Yes. There was another important occasion about 8 or 9 months later when the Togolese army ringed the hall where the interim legislature was meeting and began to beat up on some of the Deputies and humiliate them. During the 24 hour period that the army held the legislature hostage, I spoke with the President by telephone five times, even getting him in the middle of the night. I also met with some of his close associates. At first, he protested that none of this was really happening. Then I simply reminded him that the venue of the interim parliament was right outside my residence, and that I was speaking not from second-hand knowledge but with the evidence of my own eyes and ears and reports that had been telephoned to me and so on. I don't know how all that would have gone without our intervention. The legislators being humiliated inside think that my intervention may have saved some of their lives. I myself wouldn't go that far on that. I think that the intention had been to humiliate and abuse, I don't think it had been to kill legislators on that particular occasion. However, the current Prime Minister and others think we may have saved lives in that episode. And certainly, when I threatened to walk into the legislature's precincts regardless of presence of soldiers and guns, i.e., when I told the President that enough was more than enough and that at 11:00 a.m. (on the second day) I would be doing my level best to force my way into the compound, suddenly the army disappeared and people were let go, and they were all out of there by the time I arrived. These were features of the times. Other significant events featured dissidents coming in from Ghana attacking Lome's main military camp, and very nearly getting the President. There were two different attacks of that sort, which led to a lot of conflict around the city. I think we were clearly helpful on one of those occasions. The second time...working with the two governments in Lome and Accra, we were able to wind that down but only after a couple of days of very uneasy times, with a lot of gunfire, and many people killed.

Q: Towards the end of your time there, this whole thing, we're talking about 1991 into 1992 before it sort of settled down?

KIRBY: It really began to settle down only after the Presidential election in August, 1993. There was a very bad dust-up between elements of the army and the population in January, 1993, when many people were killed. As a result of that incident, four to five hundred thousand people left the country, taking refuge in Benin and Ghana. Some of the armed attackers on the Togolese military camps in March, 1993 and January, 1994 came from some of these military and civilian elements which had fled Togo in the January-February, 1993 diaspora and earlier. But you had almost constant political turmoil with guns fired in anger and so on throughout 1991-1992, and well into 1993. 1993 was a very unsettled year, politically and economically, right up until the Presidential elections in August of 1993, when Eyadema was reelected, as I said. And there then ensued a period of new uneasiness on the part of the population from August of 1993 until the Parliamentary elections in February of 1994. This was exacerbated by the dissident attack from Ghana in January, 1994, which I mentioned earlier. There was a little bit of rough stuff at the time of the Parliamentary elections in two voting districts, but not a lot. It was after that...after the Parliamentary election that there was installed a government led by an opposition Prime Minister in June, 1994. About half his Council of Ministers came from the opposition to Eyadema, and about half consisted of Eyadema loyalists. The President of the National Assembly was also an Eyadema loyalist. You asked how it all came out. It all came out in the end (at least as of today) with Eyadema and his people still firmly in power; he is still the arbiter of political developments, and he still controls the levers of the state and what have you. But, he did have to go through a real Parliamentary election and the opposition actually won that election for the first time. Internal opposition rivalries, the rivalries I referred to earlier, kept them from putting together as cohesive a government as they might otherwise have done. So, in the end, Eyadema was able to dominate the government because of the rivalries among the two major opposition party chiefs and because he still controlled the army and the gendarmerie. But at least they had established a kind of uneasy sharing of power, or, at least, of government positions. Now Eyadema and his people were again in charge but still there were other prominent political actors in the limelight as well. We'll never know what would have happened if

Eyadema had had the wisdom and perspicacity to take a slightly different path in early 1990. But the odd and interesting thing is that, I believed in early 1990, and I seem to recall that the French and German Ambassadors did as well, that if President Eyadema would at that time broaden his government by nominating a Prime Minister from what was then the still fairly tame opposition—and the man who is now Prime Minister was a possibility—if he had done that in 1990, major political trouble, and turbulence, could be avoided. I will never know, of course, how that might have worked out. In any case, my strong advice to him at the time had been to do just that. I did say to him very clearly in early 1990 that if he didn't broaden his government, I thought there was much turmoil to come. We referred to that in our final interview in mid-1994 when he suggested that I had pretty accurately predicted, if not all the details, then at least the broad outlines, of what was going to happen in Togo.

Q: How did he keep control of the army? Because so often with something like this you find a Lieutenant Colonel or Major or somebody taking on and saying, "the hell with all this" and nominating themselves to be President.

KIRBY: Well, his style...he's always been a very active chief of the military. Back in the old days, before real politics broke out at the end of 1990, Eyadema's style was to go to the Presidential palace in the morning and govern, and then go to the military camp in the afternoon and run military affairs. When there were riots in the streets and it became difficult for him to move around Lome, that changed to a certain extent, but he's always maintained a tight, close, and highly directive type of relationship with the nominal army chief, as well as with the heads of the presidential guard and of military intelligence. He has always appeared to know how to create his own systems of checks, balances, and surveillance within the military. He himself actually runs the military, of course.

Q: Was he a military man to begin with?

KIRBY: Yes, he was a non-commissioned officer in the French colonial army, with service in both Vietnam and Algeria, I think.

Q: How did you find the staff at the Embassy?

KIRBY: I found it an able staff on the whole. Given Togo's turbulent political circumstances, they had a lot to contend with. Sometimes daily survival and keeping one's spirits up were real challenges, although when difficult things are happening, people tend to respond very well, and I thought our staff did so. We had a fully integrated Embassy/ Mission, with a USAID component and a small USIS staff. We also had a large Peace Corps presence in Togo, which meant we had an American citizen Peace Corps Director, with one or two Deputy Directors who were Americans, and one who was Togolese. Yes, I thought the staff did a good job in very difficult circumstances. They were more than adequate to the task and performed very well.

Q: What was your impression of the Peace Corps?

KIRBY: I've always been pro-Peace Corps since I was first introduced to it when it was establishing itself in India, thirty some years ago. I was particularly fond of the program in Togo. It was one of our oldest, unbroken programs. The very first Peace Corps program was established in Ghana in 1961-62. But one of the very earliest ones after that was in Togo, and unlike the Ghana case, where we were phased out at one point, our program had never been phased out in Togo. At every level throughout the U.S. Government and other U.S. institutions, one finds graduates of the Peace Corps program in Togo. Senator Nancy Kassebaum, who had a lot to do with Africa in the Foreign Relations Committee told me that her daughter had been a Peace Corps volunteer in Togo and met there her husband-to-be who was also a Peace Corps volunteer. I think they even got married in Togo. So, I was by instinct and commitment very, very supportive of and protective of the Peace Corps. I always made a point of swearing in the new volunteer groups myself, and presided at some of their ceremonies, and visited volunteers as I

got around the country. I think they did good work, although particularly during Togo's time of turmoil, the volunteers major challenge was to keep their heads down and stay healthy. During much of that time, in many parts of Togo, they couldn't be as productive as they wanted to be because their Togolese counterparts were wholly caught up in political events. I continued to think that—what I'm going to say now may or may not be country specific, or a general rule that applies everywhere, and, in any case, I mean it positively and not negatively. I think the Peace Corps was originally sold to prospective volunteers and to the American people, as a framework within which volunteers would be continually and directly involved in the economic and cultural development of the countries to which they were assigned. In many countries they have made major such contributions. I think they have made real contributions in Togo. It has struck me though, in recent years, that Peace Corps volunteers get at least as much as they give...in terms of their own individual maturation and development, and that perhaps the experience of living in another society may be doing even more for their personal development than for the development of the host country. What you can quantifiably state is that their contribution to a country's development is positive, but it differs from country to country. In Togo, particularly during the time of turbulence that I have been talking about, understandably the volunteers couldn't pursue the developmental programs they initially were assigned to. However, those volunteers who were willing to take on so-called “secondary projects” as an adjunct to their main assignment—e.g., those who were willing to supervise the drilling of a well, or the building of a public latrine, or the addition of a school room to a village school where they were assigned—seemed to be the happiest and most fulfilled, because they had something they could visibly show you they had done. I was a strong user of the so-called “Ambassador's Self Help Funds.” These funds came from USAID. The Ambassador designates small projects in the countryside to benefit the local people. Peace Corps volunteers who had the time and interest to take on supervision of those projects did a very good job on the whole, and seemed to derive real satisfaction from their accomplishments.

Q: Is there anything else we should cover? You've covered rather well this really remarkable time dealing with essentially mediation together with your French and German colleagues. Anything else we should cover on Togo?

KIRBY: It was a fascinating time. Could I add one thing...you reminded me of it in the way you put your question. There was one mediation mechanism which the German and French Ambassadors and I developed on the spot because all Togolese political actors, but particularly the opposition, wanted us to do it. We then sold to our respective governments, which originally weren't quite sure, but then decided to go along with it. For both elections, the Presidential election in 1993 and the Parliamentary election in February of 1994, we developed something that was sui generis, our version of what was called an International Monitoring Commission. Although it had no particular juridical status, it was specifically called for in the agreements between Eyadema and his opposition establishing the elections. We set up shop, and we regularly met with the state instrumentalities running the elections, with President Eyadema, and with opposition leaders. As we saw discrepancies we would look into them, and we would tell one side or the other, “You shouldn't do this,” or “You really must do this.” And up to a point it worked. We had frequent meetings with President Eyadema, for example, when we thought his government, his Minister of the Interior, or someone was not handling the electoral lists in a responsible way to try to correct the situation. We were able to do some things that helped ensure that elections would in fact come about and in as reasonable circumstances as possible, given Togo's ongoing problems.

I wouldn't presume so much myself, but I confess that I was enormously pleased when, the night before we left Togo, the Prime Minister, at a dinner he gave for my wife and me with some of his political intimates and his wife, said quietly but very forcefully at the end of the meal: “It's quite simple...but for the efforts of these people (my wife and my staff), some of us would probably not be alive today, and it's certain that we would not have had the elections and the installation of the government over which I preside.” I'm not sure

about the first point, but maybe he's right. On the second point he was absolutely right. With regard to the elections, it is a fact that the opposition tried to pull out many, many times. They were always looking for excuses to pull out. They thought they couldn't win; understandably, they were afraid for their personal security and in many, many meetings —I'm sure other Ambassadors, the French and German, did so, too. I was absolutely insistent that they had to “stay the course”. This particular man claimed that for him at least and his party, and he thought this was true of the other major opposition parties as well, that it was our particular efforts keeping their feet to the fire, that kept them in the electoral game. He frankly admitted that they had been looking for legitimate reasons not to go through with the elections. So, we had made a major effort, I think, that produced momentum toward a more open system in Togo. I told my staff the very first time I met with them on December 2 or 3, 1990: “The pace of events and political change are going to be very, very rapid in the period ahead. I can't predict which way things are going to go, but change will almost certainly be more rapid and more cataclysmic than any one of us thinks here today. But, the outcome is uncertain because even if everybody, every Togolese, were to agree on the direction of change—which they don't—there is no way that a country can 'spin on a dime' and change its political culture overnight—it is a long-term thing.” So as I left Togo, my advice to the Department of State was to continue to do what we could to strengthen Togo's political institutions. We are putting in limited resources now, very limited resources. I recommended that we continue efforts to encourage respect for human rights, to strengthen the elaboration of a truly independent judiciary and independent legislative assembly, to work for freedom of the press, and to provide support for future elections. I said that over the long haul, as Togo and other similarly placed countries try to move toward a more modern political culture, that this was the way we could help them best.

Q: You came back when?

KIRBY: I came back around the first of August, 1994. And at that stage and until I retired on September 29, 1995, I was assigned to the State Department's Office of the Historian.

Q: What were you working on in that office?

KIRBY: As you know, the Historian's office does many different things. One of its major undertakings is to publish the series on U.S. Foreign Relations. When I came back there were 5 or 6 of us Senior Officers assigned there pursuant to a new idea of the Historian designed to offer a new kind of quality control review outside their normal system. We were asked to take a look at volumes they had in preparation and to see if there were any suggestions we had for improving the process. I looked at many volumes in preparation and documents having to do with Africa—both Sub-Saharan Africa with particular emphasis on the Congo, and North Africa—the Middle East, the eastern Mediterranean and South Asia during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations. That took up most of the autumn of 1994. In early 1995 the Historian asked three or four of us if we would try to design an appropriate structure for the office's approach to the eight years of the Nixon-Ford Administrations. If you were to have forty volumes, arguably, how would we structure them...by subject matter, etc?" It was quite an undertaking, everyone said the results were quite helpful. And then once in a great while, there were odd things that came up where the Historian's office was asked to help on projects that originated elsewhere in the Department. For example, the Deputy Secretary wanted a paper one day on some of the assumptions underpinning the origins of NATO, specifically with respect to democracy. He wanted to use it in the current debate on the enlargement of NATO. So, I was asked to sit down and write a piece, which I did, and which the Deputy Secretary said he found very useful. So there were things like that as well that came our way.

Q: Well, this might be a good place to call it off. Thank you very much.

KIRBY: Thank you.

End of interview